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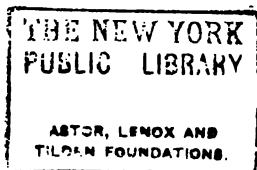
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"I put on a white pongee dress and a duck of a Nattier
blue straw hat."

THE STAR-GAZERS

BY
A. CARTER GOODLOE

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1910



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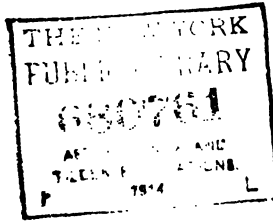
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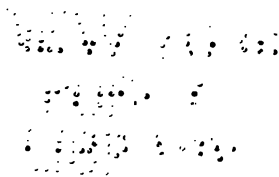
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Published September, 1910

NOY WEB
JUBA
VABAL



To
BLANCHE AND WILLIAM PRIMM WOOD
IN MEMORY OF MANY HAPPY DAYS
TOGETHER IN MEXICO



NOY V3M
21.08.17
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THE STAR-GAZERS


CONCERNING ELEANOR ERNE

S*HE came of a stock noted for two things—the roving tendencies of its men and the beauty of its women. The former had been a salient characteristic of the family ever since her great-grandfather, Sir Hugh Erne, had left England to come to the Virginia colony. With inevitable restlessness, after a few years, he had taken the Wilderness Road and pushed westward into Kentucky, halting, finally, on the banks of the beautiful river above Frankfort and building there a family mansion in the Georgian style. And although the younger generations scattered, after the family habit, there*

were always enough Ernes left to carry on the traditions and dignity of "The Hall."

When the war with Mexico broke out two of Eleanor's great-uncles hurried, with characteristic zeal for adventure, to the front. One fell fighting beside young Harry Clay, at the battle of Buena Vista; the other, surviving the war and liking the country he had invaded under arms, decided to remain in peace, only returning to Kentucky long enough to get a bride. It was in this way that Eleanor, whose grandfather, mirabile dictu, had stayed quietly in Kentucky, came to have Mexican cousins.


The family restlessness broke out again in Eleanor's father, and on the death of his wife he took his young daughter to Europe with him and spent his days in leisure travel. Having rather unorthodox ideas for a Southerner on the subject of girls'



education, he returned to America long enough to have Eleanor take a college course at one of the big Eastern institutions for the spectacular development of women. It was while there she had the good fortune to attract the attention and affectionate interest of the Professor of Astronomy, an Old Maid of the New School, whose devoted admirer she became and with whom for years she maintained a somewhat voluminous correspondence.

At twenty Eleanor was a rather splendid young creature with a respectable amount of book-learning and the heart of a child. Being handsome enough to make people turn in the streets to look after her, with a social position of her own and a father known to be rich, no one was surprised when, at the end of a few months spent in London, her engagement to a most eligible young Englishman, Lord Robert Standish, was announced.

The breaking of the engagement and the reason for it occasioned a good deal of comment, and it was shortly afterward that Mr. Erne, finding himself obliged to return to America on business, sent Eleanor to Mexico to visit her cousins and, if possible, to forget Lord Robert.



PARIS, Rue de Presbourg,
Dec. 21, —.

DEAR LADY OF THE MOON AND STARS:


Yes—it is quite true. Our engagement is broken. To put it vulgarly, Lord Bobby didn't come up to the scratch—let me go by default. In plain, unadorned Anglo-Saxon, my dear Star-Gazer, I have been jilted.

Of course, I had to write to grandmama about it—she is still at Newport—and I got a letter from her last week. The darling is perfectly furious! You see, she wanted him for her dinner-parties next summer. And how is she to explain it to everybody? Wasn't it all settled? She had thoroughly approved of a British nobleman for a grandson, and what was this ridiculous idea of papa's on the subject of marriage settlements? It was a family scandal—people would think him an ignorant provincial. It was a most brilliant match and, of course, there should have been a

large jointure, etc., etc., etc. It's quite a *chef-d'œuvre* in its way.

Papa had thought she might want me to spend the winter with her in New York as he has to go out to the States on business and can't take me to Montana with him. But not she! I am a failure, you understand—a matrimonial failure. Grandmama, who never troubles to use diplomatic evasions, made that perfectly clear to me in her letter. The worst of it, in her eyes apparently, is the fact that the little Van Antwerp girl—the Van Antwerps have a cottage at Newport next to grandmama's—has just caught the Earl of Strathore. She's awfully plain, and grandmama says that with my looks I ought to have been able to land a baronet, at least! Like Tommy Moore, I fear grandmama loves a lord.


At any rate there are a few things to be thankful for! Our engagement has not been broken by a vulgar row of any sort. The obstacle to our happiness has all the dignity of an international question—a question that my father found no difficulty in answering with an emphatic "no." If it hadn't been so tragic it must have been rather funny to hear him lecturing Lord Robert's pompous legal representative, Mr. Abingdon, K. C.,



on the subject of "marriage settlements" When that misguided individual approached papa on the delicate subject of what I would bring his noble client in cold cash, he was repudiated with all the spirit of '76. My father and I were good Americans, and an American girl is not bought or sold in marriage. The negligible fact that the would-be groom came of a class accustomed to purchase their brides made no difference in his principles and ideas on the subject! He intimated that I was priceless anyway, and that he was not at all sure that Bobby was good enough for me. [*Tête de Monsieur!*] Also that England was a free-trade country and he didn't see why there should be a high tariff on imported wives. As for Lord Robert's debts (at which the pompous legal gentleman diffidently hinted), he had no intention of helping him to settle them by presenting him with a richly dowered wife—a wife was for other and higher things, and if Lord Robert Standish did not like Mr. Erne's attitude on the subject of international marriage settlements, Mr. Erne would consider Lord Robert's proposals as withdrawn. And they were. I was weighed in the balance with two hundred thousand pounds and found very much wanting.

Poor father is terribly troubled over it all and afraid that I am unhappy. But the only consolation I have in all this wretched business is that I have stood by him and never let him suspect how much I cared. When he asks me, I lie like a lady and say haughtily that I do not wish to be married for money. And of course I don't, and of course I admire father's splendid, noble Roman attitude in the matter—I always admired noble Romans—only it seems a trifle easier to admire noble Romans in history than in one's own family.

But I *have* cared—there's no use denying it to you, dear Mentor, to whom I confess so much. I have cared most awfully, and it is hard to have the shiny beauty of the world rubbed off at twenty-one and only a dull smear left! It has cost me more than I can say to give Bobby up, and I would be an altruistic angel if it did not cost me a pang to give up Standish Court, too! Who wouldn't covet that magnificent pile of Vanbrugh's standing in the great Yorkshire park, its façade four hundred feet long, looking out over the most exquisite terraces of flowers, down to a quiet river that flows serenely away into the wonderful English landscape? By the way, isn't it a curious and beautiful dispensation of Providence



that in England each big estate always has its own private little river that glides by for the sole purpose, apparently, of making a picturesque setting for the great house? Rivers are not nearly so accommodating in America, and go rushing around in a most dangerous and disquieting fashion. Do you know that view of the terrace and river at Standish Court made me think of the vista from the wind-swept College Hill, down past the woods, with the clear lake shining in the distance, and to-night I long unutterably for my old life—the peaceful, happy college life, and for you, my dear “Sky Pilot.”

But do not be alarmed! I shall be as little melancholy as possible and follow your injunction to write you constantly, without reducing you to a pulp of commiseration, I hope. I shall “knock my rising groans on the head”—make them as brief as possible—resolve them into their component parts—an ejaculation, an exclamation. No long, gusty moans that rattle the windows of the soul, I promise you! And please remember, once and for all, if I do groan my groans will always be for my lost ideal—for I, too, have been a Star-Gazer of sorts—never, never a groan for the lost Lady Standish. I am not so weak and clinging

a vine as to still yearn to twine myself about an unwilling oak. (By the way, I consider it very handsome of me to compare, even remotely, Lord Robert to anything so sturdy and unchangeable as an oak!) I am not the kind of girl to enjoy struggling to keep an unwilling lover. Love must be a free gift or it is worthless.

After all, there are cheerful aspects to this affair. One of them is that in giving up Bobby I also give up his lady mother—a quite exceptionally disagreeable person, with an obviously dyed “fringe” and a stony stare that always made me wretchedly uncomfortable. I used to try to fix my mind on the inspiring fact that she was “the daughter of a hundred earls,” but it never seemed to help the stare or her front teeth any. I feel sure that she and Bobby’s debts have been my enemies—for Bobby loved me—I know that he did!

There is another funny side to this. All our friends in London—Americans who have made international marriages and, of course, all our English friends—stand aghast, scandalized, by father’s attitude toward that time-honored institution, the marriage settlement. That he should be so well able to give me a big one seems an aggravation of his offence in their eyes. He has been so

irritated by them that a little more and I think the dear will write a *brochure* on the subject and publish it at his own expense.

Aunt Amelia is the most scandalized of all. Aunt Amelia is father's sister and the Baronne d'Andelot. She lives in Paris in this big house in the Rue de Presbourg, and that is why we are here. When we got grandmama's violent letter last week papa determined to bring me right up here to Aunt Amelia, to spend the winter in Paris and forget—things. But Aunt Amelia has washed her hands of me, too, it seems, and told us so a couple of days ago! I feel like a piece of unsalable merchandise. She has never approved of anything about me, excepting my eyes and figure and French accent, which even she acknowledges is quite perfect. My college career especially excited her wrath, and now this breaking of my engagement with an eligible Englishman for lack of a *dot* has finished us both with her. I perceive it is a losing business—this fighting worldly conventions. If papa and I had committed a crime, instead of merely having run full-tilt against an accepted prejudice, we could not be met with more disapproval on all sides.

Such a scene as we had to-night! Aunt Amelia

(she hates "Amelia," and when I want to smooth her down I call her "Aunt Amélie," with a delicious, Frenchy accent; but when I want to be nasty I say "Aunt Amelia" in an uncompromising New England sort of way), well—Aunt Amelia was quite appallingly disagreeable. She said it would be impossible for me to make a decent marriage in France with father maintaining such an unheard-of, ridiculous stand on the subject of the *dot*.

Father was furious—I could tell because when he gets angry a stern look comes into his eyes and his nostrils dilate and get quite white—but he managed to say, politely, that he had not suggested my staying in Paris for the purpose of marrying me off—that that was the last thing he desired, especially to a Frenchman. When he said that he looked awfully hard at Aunt Amelia, who turned quite red and coughed. I suppose papa thought I did not understand, but I did; for one day grandmama had said to me, in a burst of wrath and confidence, that the baron (she detests the poor baron) was a "gay dog" and *pas convenable* even for Paris.

Of course that speech of father's settled everything, and although Aunt Amelia began to hedge

and say that it was father's own affair if he chose to stand in his daughter's matrimonial light, and that she would do her best for me, etc., etc., he wouldn't discuss it any more with her beyond saying that he would take me back to America with him, and that I should go down to Mexico to visit my cousins, who have wanted me to go to them ever since I left college.

My heart rather sank at that—it was the first I had heard of that plan, and you know I have never even seen my Mexican cousins. But I pretended to be awfully pleased, which rather exasperated Aunt Amelia, I think; for, after all, I am sure she would have liked the excitement of chaperoning me. So the upshot of it all is that I am sitting here with my trunks packed and labelled, and tomorrow early we take the boat-train for Cherbourg, catch the *Kronprinz* going westward, and in a week I shall be in New York at the Hotel Walsingham, from where I will write you again.

Yours always,

ELEANOR ERNE.

NEW YORK, Jan. 7, —,
Hotel Walsingham.

DEAR STUDENT OF THE STARS:

Here I am, sitting like Dido amid the ruins of Carthage—in other words, in a hotel room that looks as if it had been swept by a cyclone, with my trunks “made” and labelled, piled all about me.

I seem always to write you in a *déménagement*—just as I did that last night in Paris. But this time the names on the steamer tags are strange and unfamiliar and a little distasteful to me. Why should I be sailing to-morrow for “Vera Cruz” by *S.S. Orizaba*? Alas! why do we do anything in this world? Force of circumstances seems to be the motive power in most cases, and it certainly is in mine. And the less I think of what those “circumstances” are, the better. Mexico or Timbuctoo—it’s all one to me.

The head porter came up awhile ago to get instructions about my trunks. As there are a great many of them, and as the boat leaves at some unearthly early hour in the morning, it seems that I am to have a special baggage wagon to get them to the dock. When he looked at the steamer labels he hesitated and finally said shyly:

"I was a porter at Vera Cruz for three years, miss."

Solitude is a greater leveller of social ranks than revolutions, so I said affably: "And why did you leave?"

"Too much yellow-fever to suit *me*, miss," he returned grimly.

I hadn't thought of that—perhaps that will be the open door. I wouldn't care a snap except for you and father. I wonder if Bobby would care? What an idiot I am! As if it matters now whether Bobby cares or not!

There must be a foot of snow on the streets. I looked out of the window a few moments ago and the sight was beautiful. There is a slender, curved young moon and the avenue looks spotlessly white in the clear light. The cathedral towers are magnificent, rising against the sky, which is a deep blue to-night. Thousands of motors and hansoms and private carriages are rushing about in the street below, and the acetylene headlights and carriage lamps make a continual flash and glow of light. I am wondering if the girls are having a skating carnival on the lake to-night! I can conjure it all up when I close my eyes—the silvery surface of the frozen lake, the girls skimming

about like gay ghosts in their white sweaters and tams, the soft sound of talk and laughter floating up on the night air, the big bonfires here and there and from the shore the glare of the red Roman lights. Across the lake the Italian Gardens lie half buried beneath fantastic snow wreaths while above all towers College Hall upon the hill, her hundreds of lights twinkling and blinking into the frosty night.

Brrr! it makes me shiver! and when I think of all the thin, summery dresses packed away in these trunks!—I am only taking a fur coat for the steamer, a carriage wrap, and a sable stole in the way of furs.

Father cabled cousin Anita the night before we left Paris, and when we reached here we found a letter from her saying how glad she would be to have me and telling me what to bring in the way of gowns. It was very kind of her. I wonder if I am going to like her. I have meant every day to ask father about her, but I never have—the truth is, we don't talk about this trip and our separation. We keep as far away from the topic as we cheerfully can. I would ask him to-night if he were here, but unfortunately he had to go to an important business meeting with a lot of mining

men and will not get back until late. He had meant to go down with me to Vera Cruz, but he had to give that up, too, so I am to go quite alone in the captain's especial care. Thank heaven, I am an American girl, "free, white, and twenty-one," as the darkies at home used to say! Think what a fuss and excitement there would be over a French girl or even an English girl of my age taking such a journey alone!

I only hope the trip down to Vera Cruz will be pleasanter than our crossing from Cherbourg. The weather was abominable; it blew half a gale every day, and such a handful of frozen, miserable cabin passengers were never before collected together, I am sure. Even Christmas day didn't thaw us into friendliness, although the stewards with their procession of illuminated ices and pyramidal cakes and pretty flags and favors did their Teutonic best—and that is very good indeed.

There was only one man who looked in the least interesting. He was tall, with a splendid physique, a clear-cut American face and steady blue eyes that I rather liked the look of. He managed to scrape up a smoking-room acquaintance with papa, I believe, but as papa is not the kind of man who introduces chance acquaint-

ances to his daughter, I didn't have the opportunity of finding out whether he was as interesting as he looked, or even his name. He was not so good-looking as Bobby, but— (I hope you notice how I knocked *that* groan on the head!) Two or three times I thought I saw him staring at me when I was writing letters in the ladies' cabin, and he looked rather guilty when he caught my eye. He needn't have been so afraid of offending me. There are ways and ways of staring, and his way is not at all offensive.

Thank you so much for the letter I found waiting for me here. Yes, I promise you I will write often and as lengthily as possible, since you say you want to hear of all that comes my way.

And now good-night and good-by! I am so fearfully tired and sleepy that I "must to bed" and leave a call for seven o'clock, for I always do my early rising the night before, and if I am not awakened I may sleep serenely on and the *Orizaba* sail without me. That would be delightful, now I think of it!

E. E.

HAVANA, Jan. 12, —.

Only four days out and what a difference! We left New York in a blinding snow storm that made

the railing slippery and treacherous as I leaned over it, shivering in my fur coat and waving to father, who stood disconsolately on the dock under a wet umbrella. I smiled valiantly until I couldn't stand it any longer, and then, under pretence of picking up my handkerchief, I ducked my head and dropped *una furtiva lagrima*—I think it froze before it reached the deck. And now!— Well, after the first day out I just began shedding wraps and veils and winter clothes until this morning, when we sailed into Havana Harbor, I was dressed as though it were the Fourth of July.

What a glorious sight it was!—I mean the harbor! The air was so heavenly clear that one could see to the horizon's edge on every side. Above us there was a cloudless sky with a majestic sun blazing down out of its depths, making the Mediterranean-blue of the water break into millions of scintillating points of light. As we steamed slowly by Morro Castle and into view of Havana itself, glowing with color, a lump came right into my throat at the loveliness of it all. And then before I had time to properly swallow it, the captain called over the bridge to me to look on the left at all that is to be seen of the *Maine*; and there, sticking up out of the water, I saw what seemed

to be a very small part of the conning-tower with some withered wreaths, to which the donors had conscientiously affixed their cards, fastened to it. As a reminder of a fearful tragedy it was absurdly inadequate, but perhaps it was the more pathetic for that, and certainly the faded flowers and tattered ribbons flapping in the breeze, and especially the soiled calling-cards, were pathetic enough.

The trip down here has been very different from the Atlantic crossing, and I have not been alone after all. Just as papa was leaving the boat after the whistle had blown, he ran into a lady who had been standing with her back to us and who turned as he did. He seemed awfully glad to see her and introduced me. And then before he could say anything more the whistle blew again and he had to scramble down the gang-plank. Later we had a nice little chat, and I discovered that she is a Mrs. Loughridge, of Philadelphia, and that she gets her tailor gowns from the same place that I do in New Bond Street. She is really charming and so is her husband, who came up in a few minutes and was introduced. I wonder why it is that the Philadelphian is the nicest kind of American. To be a Philadelphia-American is like having the right label on

your champagne or the very best make of automobile.

At luncheon I was put in the seat of honor on the captain's right and Mrs. Loughridge on his left. When Mr. Loughridge started to sit down I heard her say: "No, no, Harry; take the other seat—leave this one next to me for Francis." I was wondering who "Francis" was when suddenly I looked up, and there coming into the room was the nice-looking American who had crossed from Cherbourg with us! I tried to look as though I had never seen him before, but he seemed so frankly pleased to see *me* again, that it was rather hard to pretend. When he sat down opposite me he began to stare just as he had done on the *Kronprinz*, and this time, for some reason or other—I suppose it was because he was so close to me—I felt rather uncomfortable. After luncheon in the music-room Mrs. Loughridge introduced him, and it seems that he is her brother, and that his name is Francis Whitney, and that he owns a coffee hacienda somewhere down on the Isthmus of Tehauntepec, and that the Loughridges are going to visit him. He has turned out to be very pleasant in a quiet sort of fashion. He hasn't any of Bobby's irresistibly droll ways—but there, that's *dépendu*.

It has been very lucky for me to meet them, otherwise I would have had a stupid time. When one is travelling alone one has such a stand-offish feeling. To-day, for instance, would have been a rather forlorn failure if I had been alone, but as it was I accepted Mrs. Loughridge's invitation¹, and we all went ashore this morning and spent a delightful day.

A tender came out from Havana for us about ten o'clock and everybody piled in, together with all the luggage of those who were not going on to Progreso or Vera Cruz. As we steamed landward Havana looked like the stage setting for some opera-bouffe. The sunlight had the same unnatural brilliance that stage sunlight has, and the pink-and-white and lavender stucco houses crowded down to the shore and were silhouetted against the masses of green foliage and dense blue sky with theatric effect. The glare on the water was terrible and we were glad to get out of the jammed, rocking little boat, and the very first thing we did was to go up to the Café Español and get a lemonade. The lemons here have quite a different flavor from those we are accustomed to—much more delicate and aromatic—and the lemonade was delicious—every one was so hot and thirsty!

When we felt cooler Mr. Whitney called an open carriage and we got in and drove all about, seeing the sights of the city. It was great fun dashing madly about in the little cab, drawn by an erratic acting horse with a chime of sleigh-bells around his neck. That chime of bells was the only cool thing in the town. The driver was dressed in spotless white linen, and whenever he wanted anything or anybody to get out of his way he rang a large dinner-bell which he had on the seat beside him. I thought it was a very good plan and saved a lot of shouting, but the sound was so suggestive that we all got quite ferociously hungry and finally had to stop driving and go to one of the big hotels for dinner. In the afternoon we shopped in the famous Obispo Street and bought some pretty fans and white canvas shoes. After that we drove some more on the Prado and had just got back to the Plaza when a terrific storm came up, incredibly sudden and violent.

The storm finished my hat! It was so hot this morning that I put on a white pongee dress and a duck of a Nattier blue straw hat I bought at Rosine's just before I left Paris. Shades of the Rue de la Paix! One day of Havana sun has done for it—all the *bleu* Nattier has departed and left

it a forlorn white. I was thinking of cabling Rosine for another, but Mrs. Loughridge says the Mexican shops are full of Paris hats, so I shall just wait and get something there.

It was delicious rowing back to the steamer after the storm, and it is quite perfect now as I sit in my little cabin with the cool night air blowing in through the porthole, a million bright stars twinkling in the dark-blue heavens, and Havana glowing sleepily in the distance. It makes me think of McAndrews—do you remember your Kipling?—

“By day, like play-house scenes, the shore slid past our sleepy eyes;

By night, those soft, lasceevious stars leered from those velvet skies.”

As always,

E. E.

PROGRESO, *Jan. 14*, —.

DEAR LADY OF THE HEAVENS:

We go from enchantment to enchantment! I thought the water in Havana Harbor was the most beautiful color in the world, and now I think this is. Here the harbor is so shallow that the sea is a lovely Nile green, shimmering almost to white under the bows of the boat. It would be quite perfect if it were not for the lean and hungry



sharks disporting themselves in it under our very noses. Their audacity is truly amazing—but then I suppose really modest sharks are scarce.

You, who are as knowing about things terrestrial as things celestial, are doubtless aware that Progreso is the seaport for Merida, the capital of Yucatan, so that it is unnecessary to mention it. I, however, was serenely unconscious of the fact until I got here. Mr. Whitney enlightened my ignorance. He is more useful than Bobby, but not nearly so amusing.

We are anchored three miles out, and the queerest-looking boats with odd-shaped sails come and go continuously between us and the shore. Great lighters are alongside of us taking off the cargo, and there is a tremendous fuss and much language about. The captain tells me as he returns he takes aboard an immense consignment of *hennequin* for New York, and that he personally has to see every bale placed in the hold, for if any of it is put in wet it will smoulder and finally burst into flame. As it all has to be brought out to the ship in open lighters, it would seem that only a special act of Providence could prevent it from getting wet. I should think the return trip would be quite trying and exciting under the circumstances, and if I

were aboard I would insist on helping the captain, and would personally and feverishly inspect each bale as it was lowered into the hold.

Life is exciting enough as it is, however, for we are now travelling with the great and only "Orrin's Circus." In the incredible depth of my ignorance I had never heard of it, and Mr. Whitney had to explain with gentle pity that it is a famous organization, known throughout the length and breadth of Latin America, and that in Mexico City it is as fashionable and firmly established an institution as the Metropolitan Opera in New York.

It came aboard yesterday at Havana. We had expected to sail early in the morning, and when the captain told us at breakfast that we would be there until the afternoon we rather regretted not having spent the night ashore. But when the circus began to arrive—which it did about ten o'clock—I was glad I was on the spot. It was most amusing to lean on the deck rail and watch the great crane stretch itself lazily over the ship's side to the lighter and tenderly pick up a great, broad-backed white horse fastened in a padded box and deposit it carefully on board. There were dozens and dozens of these riding and driving horses and per-

forming ponies and dogs, and their trainers stood in the lighters shouting warnings and directions and gazing anxiously and sympathetically after their charges as they were swung aloft and lowered by the great, slow-moving crane.


After the ark-like procession of animals had got aboard tenders came out with the members of the troupe, who tripped up the swinging stairway with the light and assured step of the trapeze artist and tight-rope walker. Whole families came—corpulent mothers and fathers evidently past their professional days, chaperoning their artistic offspring; athletic young men, and young girls of the pink-tights-and-spangled-skirt variety, who gazed with proprietary interest down upon the broad-backed white horses on the lower deck.

On and on came the circus in such numbers that I began to wonder where they were to be stowed in the boat, and I was certainly glad that I had a state-room to myself. It would have been disconcerting, at least, to have to share one with a young woman who might turn a double somersault backward when she wished to get out of her berth or practise handsprings before retiring.

However, I need not have been worried, for they all settled down quickly out of every one's way on

the forward upper deck, and in an hour seemed to be as much at home as though they were in their winter quarters in Mexico City. In the twinkling of an astonished eye parallel bars and punching bags were rigged up, around which lean and fierce young men spun, doubled up in knots, and upon which they beat a lightning tattoo. The mothers seated themselves with their knitting in doorways and on steamer-chairs and laughed and applauded as the babies, who were gravely practising somersaults, ignominiously toppled over or succeeded in their athletic efforts.

They have been at it all the morning, and the whole ship's company has stood around at discreet distances furtively watching the performers, who act exactly as if there were no one else on board. It is a novel and interesting experience and entirely *par dessus le marché*, to be standing by the deck railing and suddenly see an inoffensive-looking young man whom you had not noticed before, tip himself lightly down on his hands and walk nimbly and quietly off on them, or to be playing bridge under the deck awning and suddenly have a slim young boy whirl by you doing handsprings with the regularity and precision of clockwork.



I must stop this and get some sleep. I am going with the Loughridges and Mr. Whitney up to Merida to-morrow and they say it will be a fatiguing trip.

To-morrow is my birthday—it will seem strange to spend it in such an out-of-the-way spot as Merida! But then everything seems strange and unhappy now. How I wish it were a year ago and I could live these past twelve months over! Surely, knowing what I do now, I could “remould them nearer to the heart’s desire.” Forgive me!

Yours,

E. E.

MERIDA, Jan. 16, —.

This is the gayest little town imaginable—the gayest and the richest in proportion to its population of any Mexican city. There are only forty thousand people here and there are fourteen multi-millionaires out of that small number. It makes one feel opulent just to hear about it. And it is all on account of the *hennequin*—the beautiful white hemp that grows here better than anywhere else in the world. These rich Yucatanos live and think hemp. We came through twenty miles of it yesterday morning on the funny little narrow-

gauge railroad that runs from Progreso straight up to Merida. Progreso was a disappointing, dirty little place, and after wandering around for an hour or two in it we were glad to get on the train and come up here.

When we reached here there were the strangest-looking cabs at the station—all brass-bound everywhere. The bottom, instead of being covered with a rug, was one sheet of brass studded with nails in the most secure fashion. I wondered what could be the reason for all this, but we had not driven more than ten feet before I knew—the streets are so unspeakably rough, with great paving-stones sticking up on end, that no ordinary vehicle could hold together. It has to be something very special to bump along these streets without giving way.

To my surprise the more we rattled and shook and bumped, the more pleased Mr. Whitney and Mr. Loughridge appeared, and they finally explained that they were in an American company, with headquarters in Mexico City, which is trying to close a contract with the city of Merida to asphalt the streets. The more awful they are, the more necessary it is to have them asphalted, of course.


It was three o'clock before we had finished our luncheon, and the first thing I did when we strolled out to see the Plaza Mayor and the cathedral was to mail the letter I had written to you yesterday and a long one to father with my birthday greetings and all the news of myself since leaving him in New York. I hadn't intended to mention the fact of its being my birthday, but at dinner Mr. Whitney ordered champagne, saying that it was his birthday and that we must drink his health. And then I laughed and said it was *my* birthday too, and every one said what an odd coincidence it was and all the other silly things one says on such an occasion. He is thirty, I discovered.

The funniest thing of all was the champagne. The head waiter seemed dreadfully disconcerted when the order was given, and when the champagne actually arrived—after a long wait—it was a very miscellaneous collection—three little pint bottles, each with a different label, and a quart bottle of Pomery sec. It seems that it was all they could find, and every one had to be very careful and keep on with the same kind, as mixed champagne might have proved disastrous.

After dinner we walked about a lot more and then went to the gayest little restaurant for ices.

It was as attractive as the best Paris restaurants—a long, cool room, banked on one side with big palms and green shrubs and the other side lined with magnificent mirrors with the snake and eagle crest, and there was a tessellated marble floor and inviting little marble tables. It rather made one sit up to find such a place in the heart of Yucatan!

About ten o'clock we started back to the hotel by way of the Plaza and cathedral. The dainty little crescent moon I had left in New York was now a big, effulgent luminary that shone down on the great cathedral, flooding it with a silver light, and sifted through the dense trees in the Plaza, making big patches of white on the ground. Mr. and Mrs. Loughridge walked on ahead and Mr. Whitney and I loitered along enjoying the beauty of the tropical night to the full. We sat down to rest for a few minutes in the Plaza, and the moonlight on the trees and the splash of a fountain hidden somewhere near made me think of all sorts of things. I suppose I must have sat there some minutes, quite silent and feeling the tears welling up in my eyes, when suddenly I was conscious that he was staring at me in the old *Kronprinz* fashion. Before I could speak he leaned



forward and said in the gentlest voice—I had never noticed before how pleasant his voice is—"What's the matter, little girl?"

I would have been furious if anybody else had called me "little girl," but some way I did not mind his doing so. For a minute I couldn't speak and could only feel myself blushing furiously in the dark and stammering when I tried to say, "Nothing—I'm just tired, I think." He looked at me gravely and said, "Of course," very quietly and then we both got up and started after the Loughridges. But they seemed to have utterly disappeared in the dark, and we kept going around and around the Plaza without discovering a trace of them. Then we went back to the cathedral and up and down side streets, and finally, when I was completely *désorientée*, Mr. Whitney said that we had better go on back to the hotel and that doubtless they would be there—as they were.

I hadn't the ghost of an idea how to get back, but Mr. Whitney, although he had never been in Merida before, seemed to know quite well, and got me to the hotel in a few minutes by what, I am sure, was the best and most direct way. My respect for him went up several notches. I don't know exactly why, but women have a supreme

contempt for a man who has no bump of locality. For some occult reason we always expect them to know just how to find their way to a railway station or hotel, and the man who "gets turned around" is the object of our wrath and contumely. I remember once in Rome Bobby lost his bearings and I was distinctly annoyed with him.

This hotel is the strangest place! The bare walls do not reach to the ceiling, so that you have an uncomfortable feeling that the unknown stranger in the next room is sharing yours with you. The doors are of massive thickness with little prison-like wickets in them. The place reminds me of what some one said about a hotel in Vera Cruz; that it "seemed to have originated in the brain of a captain of a Mississippi River steamer who had passed some years in prison."

The beds are impossible—only a straw mat stretched on four posts and a single sheet folded up neatly on top! One "wraps the drapery of his couch about him" literally when he lies down—but not to pleasant dreams. I could hardly sleep at all, and kept dreaming of England and starting up at the slightest sound. I am writing this now before breakfast while I wait for the others, who seem to have slept better and longer

than I have. I think I shall keep this letter open and scribble some more to you before mailing it.

At ten we take the train back to Progreso and then the boat, and the next stop will be Vera Cruz! And I am wondering what my Mexican cousins will be like.

VERA CRUZ, *Jan. 19, —.*

It is the unexpected which always happens. Of course after nerving myself all the way from Progreso to Vera Cruz to meet my unknown cousin, Señor Don Ricardo Erne, he did not appear. Instead, he sent a young Englishman to meet me, a Mr. Waite, who got on board in some mysterious fashion, long before we anchored yesterday morning, and was piloted up to me by the first officer. He was very pleasant and explained that he had received a telegram from my cousin the night before saying that he was unavoidably detained in Mexico City on business, and asking him and his wife to take care of me until I could be started on the train for the capital.

I would have preferred to go to a hotel with the Loughridges under the circumstances, but I could scarcely refuse Mr. Waite's invitation, which was cordially renewed by his wife, whom we found on

the pier. She is a pretty little Mexican who speaks English excellently and who makes *bon ménage* with her big English husband, one of the engineers on the Port works here. They must be fond of each other or I should think they would be miserable in this little house, one in the engineers' quarters, which faces the dreariest view imaginable—a great stretch of sandy waste over which the zopilotes circle and lope lamely in a sinister, hideous way. There is no bird more imposing or more graceful on the wing than the zopilote, and none more unspeakably ugly when walking.

It is so damp here that everything has a musty odor. Last night I could hardly sleep, the sheets and pillows seemed saturated with mildew, and my linen, when I went to dress this morning, was so wet I hardly dared put it on. Mrs. Waite tells me that is one of the peculiarities of this peculiar climate, however; that no matter how much dampness there is no one ever seems to catch cold from it.

It is damper and gloomier than ever this morning, for a "norther" is raging—a cold, high wind from the north which whips the sea into dangerous waves, making the necessity for the great sea-wall now building amply apparent, and blowing the

sand into the houses in a maddening way. Although the wooden shutters and big wooden door of the little parlor had been fastened, enough sand had drifted in to have decorated the floor of a Dutch kitchen.

In spite of the weather, Mrs. Waite and I went into Vera Cruz this morning, walking across the sandy stretch of ground that lies between the engineers' quarters and the city proper, in a gale that made me shiver with cold and hang on to my hat with both hands. Under the circumstances it was not strange that I found the city most disappointing, and my interest in the Plaza and cathedral and the island of San Juan de Ulloa, last stronghold of the Spanish and the seat of the Juarez government, was so languid that we speedily returned.

Yesterday afternoon dozens of young English engineers dropped in for tea. At four o'clock Mr. Waite appeared with six in his wake and for an hour afterward more kept arriving. Work on the harbor must have been temporarily suspended, I imagine.

I do wish grandmama had seen me! Perhaps her confidence in my charms would have been restored. One big young Englishman looked as

if he would have liked to *bite* me, and after gazing uninterruptedly at me for an hour while he devoured bread-and-butter sandwiches and disposed of numberless cups of tea, naïvely informed me in a loud aside that he hadn't seen any one like me for two years!

In fact, compliments seem to be coming my way thick and fast. Mr. Waite confided to me last night that he had been tremendously relieved on seeing me. It seems that he and Mrs. Waite have been so often asked to meet and "look after" strange females arriving at Vera Cruz—governesses coming out to English families in Mexico City, the fiancées of young Englishmen living inland, spinster sisters on visits to their brothers,—that they had begun to be wary of inviting these unknown arrivals to their home. The one just before me, it seems, had been particularly frumpy, so that when my cousin's telegram was received Mr. Waite had stonily declared his intention of boarding the steamer and personally inspecting my attractions. A code of signals had been agreed upon, and if I did not meet with his approval Mrs. Waite was under no considerations to invite me to the house, and I was to be politely but firmly escorted to a hotel.

Thus do we run unknown dangers in travelling!

While we were at tea yesterday Mr. Whitney came in with the news that he and the Loughridges are going to sail to-morrow morning for Coatzacoalcos. They are fortunate, it seems, to get a coastwise steamer so quickly; but although he says they are in such good luck, I thought he did not look very happy over it. As for myself, I leave this evening by the night train for Mexico City, getting there early to-morrow morning.

I have been writing this since luncheon while Mrs. Waite is taking her siesta. And now I must stop and dress for tea.

It seems that all the engineers on the works who did not come in for tea yesterday will be here this afternoon! The incident of my arrival is apparently taking on the importance of an event.

As always,

E. E.

P. S.—This is a tremendous budget to send you at one time! Forgive it and me. I can only excuse myself by saying with Madame de Sévigné, when some one accused her of being prolix, that I “had not the leisure to be brief.”

E. E.

HOTEL DE LA PASEO,
MEXICO CITY, Jan. 21, —.

This is a heavenly place! If I had suddenly died and gone from Purgatory to Paradise the transition could not seem more complete or enchanting. Last night I had dinner at Vera Cruz, the forlornest of places, and this morning I had breakfast in Mexico City, one of the most lovely. The only grief I have is that I made the wonderful journey from the coast up here at night. I was so awfully sleepy and tired (the engineers had arrived *en masse* as predicted, the Big One bringing me votive offerings in the shape of photographs of the Port works and gazing fatuously at me as before) that I could not stay awake even as far as Cordoba, but I kept waking up during the night and caught the most wonderful glimpses from my berth window. Once I was conscious of a strange sound and feeling, and looking out in the brilliant moonlight I saw that we were taking a curved bridge that hung over a dizzy chasm. The mountains were all about us and I caught sight of Orizaba, its summit snow-white and looking so near the heavens that it truly seemed the Mountain of the Star. I am going to take this journey over again by daylight or know the reason why.

It is so exhilarating to be seven thousand five hundred feet up in the air! My spirits soared with the aneroid. I haven't felt so happy for a long time, and I was prepared to like my Mexican cousins, no matter how foreign and uncongenial they might prove. My good resolutions were entirely superfluous, however, and when I rolled into Buena Vista station this morning and found Cousin Ricardo and his wife waiting for me I all but fainted at the difference between the reality and my idea of them.

Cousin Ricardo, in spite of his Mexican name and Mexican mother, is as American as I am, and looks like any other well set-up American business man, except that he has beautiful dark eyes and long lashes that we rarely see in the States. He laughed when I called him "Cousin Ricardo," and told me that "Dick" would sound more natural from me. It seems he is a Princeton man—a great one at track athletics—and he hasn't even the trace of an accent.

Anita is entirely American—a Kentuckian whom Dick fell in love with at his Junior Prom and whom he married and brought down here, as did his grandfather before him. She is one of the most beautiful women I have ever seen, with dark-gray

eyes, exquisitely curved lips, and a distracting nose. She looks a dear, and although she and Dick have been married ten years she seems hardly any older than myself, and I am sure we are going to be great friends.

It was such a surprise and rather a relief to me to find them so charming and American! You know I have roamed around so much alone with father that my relations have been rather shadowy personages so far, and I fear I was not very clear about them; but Dick has been giving me a lot of family history this afternoon, so that I feel much more enlightened on the subject. It seems that after the Mexican War, Grandfather Richard Erne did the orthodox thing and married a Kentuckian, whom he brought back here to live. But his son, Uncle Henry, having always lived here, naturally married a Mexican. A few years after Dick and his brother Guillermo—Dick says I am to call him Bill!—were born, Uncle Enrique died and Tia Carmen moved out to a big place at San Angel, where she lives now in gloomy grandeur and seclusion. Dick “took after” his father and has turned out perfectly American, with such a talent for *les affaires* that the great banking business, which has come down to him from his grandfather,

is more prosperous than ever and the family is enormously rich. Guillermo is entirely different—like his mother, and quite Mexican. He has married a beautiful Mexican girl, so Anita says, the daughter of the Governor of Jalisco, and they live in a magnificent house in Guadalajara and own silver mines and are overpoweringly rich. Guillermo has gone in for statesmanship and is one of the “coming men” of Mexico.

Don't you think it is very interesting and exciting to find a brand-new lot of delightful relations!

But to go back. When I got here this morning and Dick had found me and my trunks had been looked up, we went out of the station and I met Anita. She was waiting for me in a perfectly appointed victoria. The horses were especially fine, and I was astonished, for I had been told that the horses in Mexico left a good deal to be desired. However, these were beauties and were imported, I suppose. We got in and drove to this hotel, Dick and Anita explaining to me that they were building a new house further out on the Paseo, and that they were living at the hotel in the meantime. So here I am installed in a delightful corner room, one big window of which looks out on the Paseo and the other on a side street, the name

of which I have not yet learned. My little sitting-room is in front of this bedroom and opens directly on the gallery or *corridor*, which runs around the *patio* in the centre of the hotel. There are no windows at all in the sitting-room, and when I want air and light I have to open the door on the *corridor*, which is very sociable, but rather public!

I am writing with my table pulled close to the window, so I can see out on the Paseo, where there is a tremendous *va et vient* and everything looks very gay. We are going for a drive after a while when Anita wakes up—she has become enough of a Mexican to take a siesta every day.

A thousand thanks for your two letters I found awaiting me here.

As always,

E. E.

HOTEL DE LA PASEO, Jan. 22, —.

DEAR GUIDE, PHILOSOPHER, AND FRIEND:

I have had a long, interesting day with hardly a minute for memories and regrets. It began early this morning when Lupe—short for Guadalupe—the little Mexican maid Anita has bestowed upon me—came noiselessly into my room with a can of hot water. She threw the shutters wide open, and such a gush of delicious, keen air

rushed in and such a splendor of morning sun beamed upon me that I jumped out of bed in a jiffy. "Up rose the sun and up rose Emilie." The can of water seemed absurdly inadequate—I wanted a bath at least, and I would have dearly liked a swim in the ocean. But having no Spanish I couldn't make her understand at all, and finally gave up the attempt and made the best of the hot water. I determined to invest in a Spanish grammar for my first purchase, and to investigate the subject of baths with Anita.

I did so later, and she tells me that taking a bath in this hotel, or anywhere else in Mexico, is *toute une affaire*. There are no baths connected with the rooms here, and when one has the unnatural craving to get into a tub of water, she has to notify the hotel management in advance, make a payment of something like a dollar, and hie herself to a remote part of the house consecrated to *los baños*, where an attendant fixes the bath and locks her in securely. There is also the return journey through the most public part of the hotel, with dishevelled hair and toilette hastily made, and later the arrival of the maid by the same and only route with one's discarded, damp linen. Altogether, bathing may be said to be discouraged here.

After breakfast Anita came into my room bringing an invitation to a dinner-dance for to-morrow night. It is to be a rather grand affair given by eight of the richest young Mexican bachelors, who have engaged the whole of the big Chapultepec restaurant. Anita says I am rather lucky to have this for my first entertainment, as it is to be a purely Mexican affair, and I will see the best Mexican society there. She wanted to see what ball dresses I had brought with me, and we spent the whole morning pulling my hats and gowns out of the trunks and boxes. She approves of them tremendously, I am glad to say. Her own things are lovely—quite as Frenchy and *nouvelle mode* as my own. She says the Mexican women all wear Paris things and the shops here import direct. She picked out a pale corn-colored tulle and my topazes for me to wear to-morrow night.

We went out driving again this afternoon in the Paseo. It is a magnificent driveway—the most splendid memento of the ill-fated Empire—stretching in a straight, level flight from the Plaza Carlos IV to Chapultepec. Every now and then it widens out into a circle or *glorieta*, adorned with fine monuments and wide stone benches on which the people lounge and listen to the military bands.

In the afternoons there is a wonderful display of carriages, and the drive is changed and regulated every day by mounted officers, so that one never quite knows which way one is going and the coachman has to be very wide awake not to make a mistake.

Anita told me all the celebrities as they passed, and was kept busy bowing right and left and wiggling her fingers at her Mexican friends, who wiggled their fingers back at her after the gay, funny custom here. When we got back from the drive we found lots of cards and invitations.

I'll keep this letter open until after the dinner-dance and write you all about it. Will you be able to tear yourself from the contemplation of the heavenly bodies long enough to read of such very earthly goings on? I wonder—but then I always have wondered why you care to hear from and of me and all my worldly foolishness!


Your affectionate Ignoramus, E. E.

HOTEL DE LA PASEO, *Jan. 27*, —.

I am taking a sun-bath—the other kind being so hard to get. The long French windows are open, and although I am well in the room I am in a flood of sunshine. It is a heavenly day out; the

air is so clear that one can see to the end of the world, and I am ashamed of having spent so much of the morning in bed. But I *was* tired after last night's dance. We did not get back until two this morning. Dinner was at half after eight, but it was really nine before we sat down at the table, for a quadrille was danced first. I was almost dead from hunger, but I nerved myself to go through with it, as I had been asked to dance it with a most resplendent individual, whose sole occupation in life is nothing more arduous than introducing ambassadors to the President! That is his title—"Introduccion de Embajadores"—it is on his calling card, which has just come with two big baskets of gardenias and roses, one for Anita and one for me. He told me that next week a Persian Ambassador Extraordinary is coming down to present President Diaz with a decoration, and he will see that I get an invitation to the ceremony at the Palace. He is so ornamental in ordinary evening clothes that I doubt if I shall be able to withstand him in his resplendent official costume!

The interior of the beautiful Chapultepec restaurant, elaborately decorated, was reserved for dancing, and dinner was served at ten large tables set on the circular veranda, which was enclosed




by heavy curtains, for it is very cold here in the morning and evening. The "Introducer" asked to take me to dinner, and just as I was about saying yes, another young Mexican, a Señor Barrios, whom Dick had introduced to me on arriving, presented himself and claimed me, and it ended by both men going in with me and making me have a very nice time. I don't believe it is the custom here, though, for a girl to have two escorts, because I saw several young Mexican girls look at us as though they were surprised, and two magnificent old señoras with mustaches on their upper lips and glorious pearls around their fat throats, positively scowled at me across the table! However, Anita didn't seem to be worried—she only smiled at me rather peculiarly from the next table, where she sat with the Governor of San Luis Potosi—and as both the "Introducer" and Señor Barrios speak English as well as I do, I enjoyed myself tremendously. Imagine a Mexican going to a dinner-party in New York and finding the American men on each side of her speaking Spanish! Every one down here seems to speak either English or French, so that I think I sha'n't feel my ignorance of the language.

The "Introducer" and Señor Barrios were very

gay and amusing, and we were so frivolous that we found a great deal to laugh at. One of the things that amused us most was the menu, which was certainly extraordinary. Our curiosity was at fever pitch about the fish, which was described as "*suprême de rovalo demi-dévil*." We couldn't imagine what the "*demi-dévil*" meant and were almost convulsed when a large white fish with black bits of truffles sticking up all over it was served.

After dinner the dancing began, and waltzes and two-steps of American manufacture, with extraordinary titles—such as "Hai Can't Tell Way" and "Creolle Belles"—alternated with *danzas*, which the Mexican girls do beautifully, of course. The men dance very well, too, especially Señor Barrios, who is evidently a tremendous favorite in society here, and whom every one calls Pacho.

I was afflicted with only one awful partner during the whole evening—a middle-aged English globe-trotter who had as bad a case of "the light fantastic toe" as I ever saw. The wretch didn't dance, he simply hopped about, his coat-tails flying out perpendicularly from his rigid body and his arms pumping up and down so that my shoulder ached. He looked a perfect guy. I refuse to think of what I must have looked like. I was



quite furious, and to make matters worse he talked the whole time across my aching shoulder.

"The two-step's great, isn't it, Miss Erne? I learned to dance it in Trinidad."

"I can easily believe it," I murmured wearily.

"By Jove, you know I never learned to dance when I was young—the governor thought it was wicked to dance."

"It is wicked the way some men dance," I said calmly. He didn't ask me for any more dances.

The women are very pretty and dress well—there were some beautiful Paris gowns and the display of pearls was quite gorgeous. Anita tells me that nearly all the young girls have fine strings of pearls—it is the regulation present to them when they grow up and they are handed down in the family generation after generation. I shall be very much out of it, I fear, as I have no pearls, only a diamond necklace and some fine old sapphires and topazes.

We went away about half after one, and the drive back down the broad Paseo, under the waning moon, was heavenly. It was bitterly cold, though, and we drew our wraps tight about us. It seemed incredible that only twelve hours before it had been so burning hot.

E..E.

HOTEL DE LA PASEO, Jan. 27,——.

We have been shopping all morning. It was our first chance, there has been so much "doing." People call here in shoals, especially men. Everybody drops in for tea, which we have served in our private little drawing-room looking out on the patio, and I have already met dozens of extremely attractive people. Anita is equally popular in all circles here—the diplomatic, the Mexican, the English, and the American. The diplomats seem to admire her especially, and she is almost as great a favorite with the Mexicans, who, as a rule, are hard to get acquainted with and chary of opening their homes to outsiders. But it seems that the Ernes have an exceptional position down here and Aunt Carmen belongs to a terribly swagger Mexican family, so that Dick and Anita have the entrée to the best Mexican houses *naturalmente*.

The "Introducer" and "Pacho" have called, of course, and several young Englishmen, one of whom I like very much. He is a Mr. Arthur Chiswold and is very handsome after a fair, Byronic fashion, and as agreeable as good-looking. He is a flippant youth. Being only a young business man himself, he rather resents the pretensions of the diplomatic corps, and never refers to it ex-

cept as "the dippy corpse." We are going out to the Cricket Club for tea with him next week.


This morning we made an effort and got out early. One has to start shopping at an early hour here, as at twelve or half after every one is shoo'd out of the stores, the shutters are put up as if it were seven o'clock in the evening, and all the world goes off to smoke cigarettes and knit up the ravelled sleeve of care until two, when the stores all open up again as though nothing had happened.

All that Mrs. Loughridge had told me of the shops I found to be true—the better ones are full of lovely things from Paris and all of them are christened with the most alluring names, like *La Perla*, *La Violeta*, *La Esmeralda*, *El Palacio de Hierro*. I can't think why the shops in New York and London haven't fascinating, suggestive names, too. One would feel so much more certain of extracting something pretty from a shop called "*La Primavera y Sorpresa*" than from one called "*Peter Robinson's*," or "*McCreery's*."

The jewel shops were really splendid, and Anita and I amused ourselves by giving each other presents. I chose a big silver box for her dressing table and she picked out for me a love of a ring—a slender curved stem set with four white diamonds

and a pearl in the centre that has an exquisite orient. It is fascinating. I have it on now and I can't keep my eyes off of it. I sent you something, too, dear Lady—only a buhl letter box into which I thought you might toss these effusions of mine—always provided you don't make nice little *auto-da-fés* of them instantly after reading them!

We stayed so long in the shops looking at the pretty things that they began to close up on us, and so we got in the carriage and drove about a bit before coming back for luncheon and I had the chance to see how queerly the streets are named here. Mexicans seem to have a perfect passion for bestowing names, and the same street will be called in a half dozen different ways. It is just as though Fifth Avenue between Twenty-third and Twenty-eighth Streets were called Fifth Avenue, from Twenty-eighth to Thirty-fourth, Manhattan Avenue, and from Thirty-fourth to Forty-second, New Amsterdam, and so on up the street. To make matters worse here, as there are only about four blocks to a name, they will put a neat little numeral before the name of the street so as to let you know just which block of that particular section of the street is meant, but as no one seemed to know which way the numbers begin, one isn't



much the wiser. Sometimes a long street is called the Avenida something or other, and each block will have its own little name independently of the street as a whole. It really seems best to turn such a complicated matter over to the coachman and let him find where one wants to go, if he can.

It was while we were driving up San Francisco Street, and I was leaning out to see what the name of the next block would be, that I had a shock. A young man started to cross the street, but seeing that he couldn't get over in time, stopped and waited for the carriage to pass. As he stood there I saw him quite distinctly, and he was so like Bobby that my heart gave an awful jump and then sank about a mile. To my surprise Anita bowed to him, and when I asked her who he was I discovered why he was so like Bobby. He is his cousin—the Honorable Trevor St. John, younger brother of the Earl of Newholme. The St. Johns, it seems, have enormous interests here in Mexico and one of them has to be here all the time. I hope I shall not see the Honorable Trevor again—Bobby's cousins, even to the third and fourth degree, are displeasing to me. I want to forget—forget that the man I loved and who I was so sure

loved me, has given me up. That's a bitter cud to chew—and as there is nothing ruminant in my make-up, I am going to refuse to chew it!

Yours defiantly,

E. E.

HOTEL DE LA PASEO, Jan. 30, —.

So you are glad I have eyes for some one beside Bobby! Well, one could hardly miss Mr. Whitney—he is so big. But really, I'm exuberantly contented these days—I enjoy myself without a single dismal *arrière pensée*. This afternoon, for example, I've had a delightful time at the American Embassy. Mrs. Finding, who called upon us the other day when we were out, is a great friend of Anita's. We returned her call this afternoon and I am charmed with her. She is as pretty as possible and quite twenty-five years younger than her husband. The ambassador is just the type of middle-aged man whom a young girl would adore—tall, bronzed, with thick dark hair turning gray at the temples, steady blue eyes, and the pleasantest deep voice imaginable. While I was talking with him this afternoon, the thought popped into my head—I can't imagine why—that Mr. Whitney, when he arrived at the ambassador's age, would

be just such another man. I think I rather like that quiet, responsible type of man, and yet certainly no one could ever have accused Lord Robert of being either quiet or responsible!

Mr. Finding has an older brother visiting him who is his counterpart. The same deep, mellow voice, the same genial manner. To my astonishment I found myself talking to him as to an old friend, telling him of my past life, my travels with father, my life at college and all about *you*, my dear Astronomer. He seemed to be tremendously interested in it all, but especially in you. He says he is a Star-Gazer himself. I'm sure you would be friends if you could only meet.

The American Embassy is a large, beautiful old house set deep in a tropical garden. A small but fierce-looking Mexican soldier guards the entrance and eyed us suspiciously as we rolled in under the eagle adorning the gateway. There were crowds of callers and the long rooms were already filled when we got there.

The Findings's afternoon-at-home is conducted on very simple and hospitable lines. A big table set with tea was in one corner of the drawing-room, and young Englishmen were as thick around it as "leaves in Vallombrosa." In an-

other corner was another table with claret-cup, cakes, and sweets, and servants went noiselessly about with things. Nearly everybody I had met in Mexico City was there, and pretty much all the "dippy corpse" lounging about and apparently very much at home. The few whom I had not met already were introduced this afternoon. One of them is tremendously interesting I am sure. He is Count Boris Lermontoff, second secretary of the Russian legation, and has a quietly bored, *weltschmerz* kind of an expression on his unhand-some features that is rather irresistible. He looks clever to his finger tips.

Then there was the little Jap minister who spoke English with such indistinctness and lightning rapidity that I shall simply call him the Oriental Express, although I believe his real name is Mr. Jumpeo Kyashi. Anita tells me he is the most learned man in the service here, but I am convinced that Lermontoff is the most brilliant. And yet I should be of just the contrary opinion, for the Oriental Express paid me the most embarrassing extravagant compliments, and Lermontoff treated me as though I were an unsophisticated child.

About half after four a Wymond excursion

party drifted in and were introduced to the ambassador and his wife by a pompous, agitated little man who seemed to be in charge. They consumed immense quantities of claret-cup and cake, and it was while in the act of partaking of these delectable viands that a middle-aged gentleman from Keokuk or Butte, or some other geographical extremity, bore down upon Mrs. Finding, and shifting his glass from one fat hand to the other, grasped hers firmly and said tactfully in a sonorous voice, "I'm glad to make your acquaintance, ma'am. I just dropped down on ye" (I was glad he hadn't "dropped" on me) "to see if Uncle Sam was holdin' his own in this yere greaser country, and I'm pleased to see such style, such magnificence I may say" (he swept the beautiful drawing-room with a large, Western comprehensiveness). "I used to think seventeen thousand five hundred was too much for an ambassador to a one-horse dago country, but by gosh! after seein' this palatial" (he pronounced it pal-latial) "dwellin' an' you, ma'am" (he bowed gallantly), "I'll be darned if I wouldn't like to see his wages doubled."

He then retreated heavily toward the refreshment table and began on a new supply of claret-cup and pistachio cakes.

Mrs. Finding gave me a look—I had been near her during this appalling episode—and we just stood there looking at one another and so convulsed with mirth that we couldn't speak. She is almost as much of a dear as Anita, and I hope I shall see a great deal of her.

The tourist party had hardly gone when a very different bunch of people arrived—the invited guests of a Mr. Tracy Boyd of New York, who had come down in his private car. The *raison d'être* of the expedition was obviously the beautiful little widow, who appeared in what we supposed to be second mourning, but which I am inclined to think was fourth or fifth. At any rate, she wore a white lace dress, a big black picture hat, and a chain of splendid matrix turquoises about her neck! She had shortly before married the owner of ten millions who had promptly and considerably died, had got herself talked about over two continents in an incredibly short time, and is now the gayest, most *insouciant* little creature in the world apparently. Mr. Tracy Boyd evidently exists but in her smile (he ought to exist well for it is almost continuous—at least in public), and in fifteen minutes half the men in the room were clustered about her. I couldn't help

but reflect that ten millions have potent attractions only too well appreciated by a dowerless young woman. However, I did not feel bitter—only philosophic—for were not the other half of the men about me?

Everybody began to disappear about six o'clock and Anita and I were just thinking of going too, when Mrs. Finding came up and whispered to us to stay a while—that Lermontoff was going to play. So when the big rooms were quite empty, Mr. and Mrs. Finding, "Pacho," Anita, and I sat down in the far drawing-room near the Pleyel grand and listened to Lermontoff.

It was quite heavenly. The scent of innumerable roses and magnolias and heavily odorous tropical flowers came to us through the long French windows and mingled with the honey-sweet tones of the piano. Sometimes I couldn't tell whether I was smelling or hearing—I was only conscious of an indescribable joy and sad happiness and a wonder at the talent of the man who sat so nonchalantly at the piano and drew forth such entrancing melodies. It was done so easily—with so little effort—one could never for a moment imagine him ever having had any bad quarters of an hour with Czerny or Tausig. I am

quite sure that the first time he ever played he played just like that.

We sat there for an hour or more almost without speaking, just listening in silent enjoyment to the loveliest bits from "Manon" and "La Bohème" and "Pagliacci" and things of Rachmaninoff—that inimitable serenade for one, where the student gets drunk and sings indecorously rollicking love songs to the lady of his immature heart.

When we went out to get in our carriage we found Arthur Chiswold smoking a cigar and waiting for us in the *corridor*. He and "Pacho" drove back with us, and as we skimmed down the broad Paseo, round the *glorietas*, catching bursts of military music from the bands in the kiosks as we circled by, and glimpses of the idle, happy crowds listening, the weight of the last year seemed to slip entirely from my shoulders. It is so splendid to be free again. Love is like fire—a good servant but a bad master. And I am as afraid of love as I am of fire—no more of it for me! I snap my burnt fingers at you, Lord Robert Standish, wherever you may be! After all, it is a wonderful thing to be alive, and this old world is a glorious place full of interesting men. You are not the only one, Bobby, I am happy to say! Have I not

just said good-evening to two splendid Americans and a wonderful Russian, and did not two clever and agreeable men find it pleasant to drive home with me and was not even the Oriental Express charming? I can imagine some high-born, almond-eyed little lady of Tokyo being as silly about him as I was a few months ago about you, Bobby!

Am I not recovering? Answer me that, dear Mentor.

E. E.

HOTEL DE LA PASEO, *Jan. 31*, —.

“Se défier de soi est le premier pas vers la sagesse!” In plain English, I’ve had a bad day of it. Perhaps my liver is out of order. I don’t know exactly where the liver is nor what it is like, but when one feels blue and sentimental and remembers people one had better forget, one can feel pretty sure it is caused by a drunk and disorderly liver. It is a grand thing to have an accommodating organ like that which can be held responsible for all one’s ills. It saves much time and thought and worrying about other entirely innocent portions of one’s anatomy. I can’t seem to think of liver in any way except as it comes on the breakfast table in a covered silver dish with

curly bits of fried bacon sticking up between the pieces. Of course, it is impossible that there should be slices of bacon with the human liver. Perhaps that is the reason it gets out of order. But these are mysteries too deep for me!

Perhaps it isn't my liver after all—possibly it was the Honorable Trevor who came in yesterday for tea. I wouldn't have seen him, but he caught me in our little drawing-room where Anita and I were entertaining at one and the same instant a marquis, a baron, and a count. I must say I was rather enjoying myself with so many titles and kept them in the air like a juggler with his balls. It was lucky for him that the Honorable Trevor is the brother of an earl; commoners would have palled on me.

He reminded me horribly of Bobby: the same bright smile and clear voice, the same amusing, inconsequential way of talking. Two or three times I bent over the tea kettle and shut my eyes. A hard lump came into my throat and all the brightness and peace of the last few weeks vanished as if by magic.

When I came up to my room last night I got out a little volume of Stevenson I brought with me and read some of the "Vailima Prayers."

I copied this one and pinned it up beside my mirror:

"Give us grace and strength to forbear and to persevere. Give us courage and gayety and the quiet mind, spare to us our friends, soften us to our enemies. Bless us, if it may be, in all our innocent endeavors. If it may not, give us strength to encounter that which is to come that we may be brave in peril, constant in tribulation, temperate in wrath and in all changes of fortune, and down to the gates of death, loyal and loving one to another.—Amen."

Yours,

E. E.

HOTEL DE LA PASEO, Feb. 2, —.

It is incredible but it is true. There is not a flower shop in this land of flowers! There is only the *Mercado de Flores* in the big circular kiosk by the Cathedral. It is the early comer that gets the flowers, in Mexico, for in the gray dawn do these peon merchants float down the Viga Canal in their canoes laden with flowers, and at an unearthly hour they are ready for business in the big kiosk. At twelve the flowers have all disappeared, and if one has not had the foresight to buy flowers before noon he will get none—no after thoughts will avail

to bring them back—there will be no more until the next morning.

Anita having warned me of the awful irrevocableness of the whole transaction, I started betimes this morning as flowers are a necessity, there being guests for dinner. Of course, Anita could have left the matter of flowers to the major-domo at the hotel, but we both distrust the taste of a man who wears yellow-pink hair and who can't see very well any way, one eye being tightly bandaged, not to mention the left arm and hand.

This awful apparition burst upon my sight when I entered the dining-room on the day I reached here. Anita really should have warned me. She says she forgot to. I was speechless with amazement and simply couldn't take my eyes off his extraordinary hair. It was snow-white once, but where the bandage permitted it to show well, it is now the color of sulphur. At night one can't tell whether it is yellow or light pink. It is quite the most awful hair I have ever seen. Baudelaire's green hair was as nothing beside it. I could scarcely wait to reach our rooms and learn from Anita what had happened to the poor man. What happened to him was what happens daily to all of us—too much Mrs. Kendall-Jones.

Mrs. Kendall-Jones, a jumpy sort of person, is the English housekeeper of this Mexican hotel, and one might as well try to make water and oil mix—Mrs. Kendall-Jones being the water, *bien entendu*; there is nothing oily about her—as to try to make her an integral and pleasant part of the hotel management. Theoretically, it is a wise thing to have an English housekeeper in a Mexican hotel—it attracts the English and American travellers and subtly suggests that the beds will be tenantless, the meals good, and that a bath will not be merely a fond remembrance. But practically it does not work, for the simple reason that Mrs. Kendall-Jones is not a housekeeper. She is a thunder-storm. The maids flee before her in terror; the contents of bedrooms and salons are swept out into the *corridor* when she speaks as though a high wind had passed over the spot; her criticisms of the cooking frighten the chef to the point of open rebellion, and the major-domo dares not call his soul his own.

He did call his hair his own though, until a week before my arrival. At that unlucky crisis of his life a fire broke out in the kitchen, and in helping to put it out he was severely burned about the head and arms. Mrs. Kendall-Jones immedi-

ately took charge of the situation with her wonted masterfulness, and while the unfortunate majordomo was temporarily *hors de combat* she swathed his injured head herself in bandages soaked with some strange liquid from her own particular pharmacopœia.

The results were, doubtless, as horrific to Mrs. Kendall-Jones as to the infuriated Gregorio who, when he first saw himself after the disaster, went off into an ecstasy of Spanish reproaches that cut Mrs. Kendall-Jones's well-meaning soul to the quick, and has caused a lasting coolness between them. Dick says it will be weeks before Gregorio's hair gets the right color again, and how I am to eat with appetite during that time I don't know. Sulphur colored hair doesn't seem to go well with anything I like.

I can't think how it is I am scribbling to you of Mrs. Kendall-Jones when I started out to write of flowers. Topics more dissimilar could not well be imagined.

As for the flowers they were heavenly. Such masses of blooms! The big kiosk was one riot of color, one huge bouquet. When I stepped out of the carriage a dozen brown hands holding great bunches of roses and gardenias and magno-

lias were stretched out toward me, and a dozen pleading voices begged me to buy. Inside the kiosk where the wonderful flowers were piled high up toward the great glass dome, I stood bewildered, transfixed. I had never seen so many flowers at one time—it was intoxicating! The sellers gathered around me in the most engaging, *caline* manner, calling me *niña*—it made me think of the darkies' "chile"—and begging me to buy. I wanted to take all the flowers I saw, they were so preposterously cheap. I got an armful of gardenias for a *real*, and laughed when I thought of paying eight or nine times as much for a single blossom at Thorley's or Small's. And the roses and violets! When I couldn't hold any more I had them banked up on the seat of the victoria, barely leaving room for myself, and bestowed a great mass of a deliciously sweet, feathery white flower I had never seen before on the box seat, where it tickled José behind the ear and made him smile foolishly all the way up San Francisco Street.

Just as I had got myself nicely arranged in the carriage and was about to start, I saw Pacho coming out of the other side of the kiosk. I certainly was surprised to see him at that hour of the morn-

ing and he seemed tremendously glad to see me—in fact, he seems tremendously glad to see me every time he sets his eyes upon me, and that's a bad sign, I fear.

“Good-morning,” I said, “and how long have you been in the kiosk?”

“Half an hour, and you?”

“So have I—we have probably been going around in circles. How silly!” and I laughed. I was so happy with my flowers that I could have laughed just then at Abel's demonstration of the impossibility of solving a quintic equation by means of radicals.

Pacho was staring at me. “Perhaps if I had seen you I wouldn't have recognized you—I would have taken you for a flower——”

“Don't!” I said pleadingly, but I gave him my best smile. After all, it isn't positively disagreeable to have a charming young Spaniard compare one to a flower. Suddenly a horrid thought came into my head. “What are you doing at the flower market?” I demanded.

“Trying to find some flowers beautiful enough to send to a young American who lives at the Paseo Hotel, and whom I thought still asleep,” he said with a delightful smile.

"I'm sure she'll appreciate them," I said and I smiled, too. Really I couldn't help it.

"Don't forget you are to dine with me at Chapultepec to-morrow evening," he said, as the horses started.

"Your flowers will remind me," I said, and I smiled again, I am sorry to say.

Pacho's flowers were in my rooms when I got back to the hotel, and they were so exquisite that I wanted to kiss, to hug them, to do some silly, extravagant thing to express my joy in them. Anita seemed rather scandalized by their profusion and comparative costliness.

"You'll get him into an awful mess," she said severely, after she had looked them and me over.

"Oh, Anita, don't be cross! What *do* you mean?" I demanded.

Anita sat down in my big chair by the window that gives on the Paseo.

"My dear child," she said impressively, "Pacho hasn't a cent of his own—he is entirely dependent on his aunt, the Marquesa de Galvaez, who would, doubtless, cut him off with *dos reales*—or whatever is the Mexican equivalent for the proverbial shilling—if she knew he was squandering his money and his attentions on a dowerless American girl."

I laughed. "While it is true that I am dowderless, it is also true that father is quite vulgarly rich, Anita. The marquesa needn't get so excited."


"It is true that your father is rich, but he may also live twenty years, Eleanor. And in the meantime, what would you and Pachó live on? I don't think anybody—even the most ardent scientist—has as yet tried to live for twenty years without food or clothing."

I have already discovered that it is sometimes impossible to argue with Anita.

"The marquesa need not worry," I said haughtily. "I haven't the slightest intention of marrying Pachó. Aside from other considerations nothing would induce me to marry a grown, able-bodied man who allows himself to be supported by an exacting female relative. It's abominable."

"Oh, that is nothing here," said Anita impartially. "Lots of young men do it, and you couldn't expect Pachó to pitch in and work, you know. He was brought up with the expectation of having millions, but when his father died everything seemed to have disappeared."

"Nevertheless, it's abominable," I reiterated, "and he must feel humiliated to the last degree."



Think how ghastly uncomfortable he must feel when the marquesa condescendingly hands him out a hundred *pesos*!"

"But just think how ghastly uncomfortable he would feel if she didn't," returned Anita calmly.

Yours philosophically,

E. E.

Monday, Feb. 4, —.

Pacho's dinner last night at Chapultepec was a failure. Dick had to go to San Luis Potosi unexpectedly and Pacho asked Lermontoff, who made himself disagreeable at my expense. It was about a very lively air which the musicians struck up and which seemed to be tremendously popular. In an instant people were singing it everywhere in the restaurant. There was something irresistibly droll and catchy about it, but when I asked what it was, to my surprise Anita gave me a frozen stare and Pacho squirmed uncomfortably in his seat and said nothing. I gazed blankly from one to the other and then at Lermontoff, who leaned forward and with a cynical grin on his face said: "Sh! that is the famous 'El Morrongo,' and the words are not such as can be translated to an American miss who, although she has been to college, knows nothing of life!"

I think I rather hate Lermontoff. I am sure that, like Byron, he is "mad, bad, and dangerous to know."

The dinner itself was all right. Pachó knows how to order a dinner *dans la perfection*, and everything was delicious except the first bottle of champagne which was quite flat when it was opened. It seems that on account of the altitude champagne is apt to go "flat." By the way, it is rather startling to see the way they drink champagne here—no small glasses, but large goblets that hold a terrifying amount. When one remembers that at this altitude a teaspoonful of anything stronger than water is apt to go to the head, the custom is really rather alarming.

Perhaps they have acquired the habit because this is such a thirsty place at best. The air is so dry that one's mouth is always parched, and one is forever ordering Topo Chico or Tehuacan water, or plastering cold cream or glycerine jelly on one's cracked lips. The girls carry little silver boxes at their belts filled with some sort of soothing lotion which they unconcernedly rub on their lips whenever the fancy takes them.

But to return to our muttons; we were eating along placidly and I was still in a trance of ad-

miration over a beautiful woman at a table near us and her wonderful necklace of rubies which we had been discussing, when suddenly I heard Lermontoff talking about the disrupted condition of Poland. How he ever got from that necklace of rubies to Poland I don't know—unless it was by way of the Princess Dolgorouki and her ruby mines—and then I heard Pachó say with a bitter complacency: "All countries must pass that way. They have their youth, their prime, their decay, like the individual. Even your apparently invincible United States will be broken up, conquered, some day."

"O my country, if ever I forget thee!" flashed across my brain, together with a jumbled recollection of Manila Bay, Santiago, and San Juan Hill. I turned upon him: "Well, not by the Spaniards anyway," I said calmly.

And then I realized what I had done. Pachó turned as white as the table cloth; he, too, doubtless had visions of a maimed fleet trying in agony to make its way out of a death trap under a rain of fire; of a crushed, dishonored admiral sailing back to crippled Spain—and he positively glared at me. Anita looked stunned and even Boris was obviously embarrassed. I have, at least, the satisfaction of having given him a unique sensation.

Later on when the dinner, which we finished wretchedly somehow or other, was over, and we were strolling about under the trees a bit before getting into the carriage, I made some sort of an apology to Pacho. I really was sorry to have hurt his feelings—I could see he had taken it terribly to heart. Anita and Boris were walking slowly ahead of us, and I was sure they had left Pacho and myself together that I might make some sort of reparation for my rudeness. I knew Anita would only give me a few moments as it was terribly *inconvenient* for me to be alone with Pacho, so I plunged in boldly and I fear I succeeded only too well, for suddenly he turned around and grabbed one of my hands and said that I had been quite right to say what I did; Spain had been vanquished by America, and that for his part he was glad to be in subjection if only one fair American would reign over his heart, and a lot more nonsense which was mercifully cut short by our bumping into Anita and Lermontoff, who had stopped in the shadow of a great tree to wait for us and whom neither of us saw, Pacho being so busy talking and I so occupied in trying to get my hand away from him.

After that we went home, and all the way down the Paseo I kept thinking how angry the mar-

quesa would be if she knew, and that Dick really must give the penniless and ardent Pacho a hint that I am "dowerless."

Your dejected

E. E.

Feb. 6, —.

Yesterday was a veritable red-letter day! One from you and two from father. He writes that he has bought a silver mine in Durango and, perhaps, he will be down here himself later in the spring. I can hardly wait to see the dear! There is no one like him; when I think of these men here they sink into insignificance beside his splendid, sane, vigorous personality. Pacho seems like a sentimental good-for-nothing, Arthur Chiswold a pleasant school-boy, the Oriental Express a clever manikin, and Lermontoff a futile cynic. Only Mr. Finding and his brother—I do wish you knew him!—and Mr. Whitney can be compared with him, and as it has been three weeks since I saw Mr. Whitney and as he seems to have forgotten my existence, I am not going to flatter him by comparing him with my own particular G. O. M.

Yesterday we went out in state to San Angel to pay our call of ceremony on Tia Carmen.

Anita had been threatening to take me for a week and I had rather dreaded it, but I am sorry now we didn't go sooner. I was enchanted with everything, especially the laces! But they were the *bonne bouche* and came last.

We drove out the Paseo past Chapultepec, and took the beautiful shady road that leads past Tacubaya and Mixcoac. The morning air was like the traditional wine and our fur stoles over our thin dresses were most comfortable.

Of course, I knew that Aunt Carmen was rich and had a great place, but I was unprepared for such magnificence and state. She lives in a veritable palace on the outskirts of San Angel, with a splendid park all around it, a private chapel and numerous houses for her dependents, of whom there seems to be an unlimited number.


A servant in undress livery opened the big iron gates and we swung into a beautiful avenue, that circled and twisted amid great trees and beds of brilliant flowers up to the house, a typical Mexican pile of stucco built around a *patio*. Two house servants in quite gorgeous liveries were waiting for us on the steps and conducted us along the *corridor*, past ample, lofty rooms, to a small salon where Tia Carmen received us with a grave and

gracious courtesy, that struck me as being the very flower of good breeding. I am so confused now that I can't recollect just what I did expect Tia Carmen to look like, but as my only associations with the name brought to mind oversprightly and reprehensibly undignified young women, I received something of a shock when I was ushered into her presence. She was little and old and shrivelled, with the premature dryness that seems to come to the women of the hot countries, and yet she was a great lady and impressed me as very few great ladies ever have. I thought of Bobby's mother with her dislocated belt, her uncompromising accent, and her staccato movements, and shuddered.

When Tia Carmen saw me, she said: "How like my poor Léonor"—Dick's sister who died at eighteen—and put her handkerchief to her eyes. She speaks delightful English with just enough of an accent to make it interesting, and one watches for it as one does for the dash of salt on a melon—it brings out all the flavor. She asked me numberless questions about father and about my life in America and abroad, and if Mexico did not remind me of Paris as it did her—she had been educated there at the Couvent des Oiseaux

—and the tears came into her fine, dark eyes when I told her of the *déménagement* of the convents and the flight of the sisters. She had never before realized the tremendous religious upheaval in France and that the convents were really things of the past.

After a while Anita suggested that I might like to see the house, and Tia Carmen sent for the major-domo, a most imposing functionary with long side whiskers and green velvet trousers. All together we started on a tour of inspection, the major-domo going first and throwing open the doors of the closed rooms and leading the way to the tessellated marble *corridor* that ran around a beautiful *patio* and on which the ample, lofty rooms all gave. There was a great number of these rooms, most of them with marble floors and high ceilings extravagantly frescoed in clouds and delightful, scantily attired cupids, so that there was a tropical, open-air effect about the whole house. All of the furnishings were in the French style, however—gilt consoles and Beauvais tapestries—and except for a Mexican touch here and there and the exquisite *patio* one could imagine himself in a great house in the Faubourg St. Germain.



It was the *patio* that captivated me, and I hung over the railing of the *corridor* and gazed with delight at the big, shining rubber plants and palms and masses of feathery green everywhere. Two Mexican servants were going quietly about with earthen pots of water, drenching the succulent leaves that sparkled freshly in the sunlight. A big parrot swung lazily to and fro at one end and talked glibly in Spanish. It humiliated me to think how much more Spanish that parrot knows than I do!

I wasn't allowed to enjoy myself in the *patio* as long as I wanted, for there were the twenty bedrooms on the second floor to be inspected. Some of them were quite gorgeous—especially the suite of state in which General Juarez had once been entertained for a week, and later where the President and Madame Diaz had passed the night when on a visit to Tia Carmen.

Tia Carmen's room was a vast apartment, so big that even the great mahogany bed, almost black from age and hung with crimson satin, looked lost. Beautiful things were everywhere—a yellowing ivory Christ hung above her prayer-chair; between two of the long French windows was a Sèvres vase of the priceless *pâte tendre*, and

at one end of the room stood the most magnificent old chest of Spanish chestnut I have ever seen, rich with carvings representing "The Marriage in Cana."

Anita came over to where I stood breathlessly looking down at it. "Isn't it wonderful?" she said, "but the inside is more wonderful still. It's an old marriage chest, as you see, but your aunt uses it to keep her laces in. They are quite fabulous, you know; would you like to see them?" and almost before I had time to eagerly assent she had turned to Tia Carmen and asked if I could not be shown the laces. Tia Carmen seemed to be awfully pleased with my enthusiasm—lace is her hobby, it appears—and the major-domo was sent to summon her maid, who unlocked the chest and spread out the treasures.

Of all the exquisite material things of the world nothing seems to me as exquisite as laces. I hung over those in an ecstasy of pleasure and literally gasped with delight as the maid drew forth piece after piece—a long bridal veil of cobwebby Alençon of as fantastic and lovely a pattern as the hoar-frost on a window pane of a winter's morning; deep flounces of Duchesse creamy with age, overcast here and there with rich raised work or

broken lightly away to make room for some inset of fairy-like delicacy—wheel or leaf or flower—in old Rose Point; and there was a dress, with sweeping train of the pale yellow Bruges, encrusted with bold motifs and around the bottom of which ran an incredibly exquisite design of lake and swan; there was some sumptuous Point de Venise, and much lovely black Chantilly and dainty Carrickmacross, and there were mantillas of silk pillow lace and yards and yards of old Valenciennes.

I sat there bewildered, entranced, longing to crush the beautiful stuffs in my hands, to smother my face in them, wondering who had dreamed the designs and what patient fingers had lovingly or wearisomely fashioned them with swiftly darting needle or skipping bobbins. Suddenly I heard Tia Carmen say: "The child loves laces as I do! Blanca, hand me that bertha of old point—I shall give it to the Señorita Léonor," and she put into my hands the most exquisite deep bertha of Brussels Point. "It will look well with your pearls," she added.

"It is quite heavenly, Tia Carmen, and I can't thank you enough, but—I haven't any pearls," I said.

Tia Carmen looked at me speechless for a full minute. If I had said I hadn't a soul she could not have appeared more horror-stricken. She turned to Anita as if for a denial of the dreadful news, but Anita shook her beautiful head.

"It's true," she murmured solemnly under her breath. I don't think I ever felt more culpable in my life.

"Poor Ricardo! of what is he thinking?" said Tia Carmen when she could speak.

"Well—evidently not of pearls," I said cheerfully. I really felt that I must try and bear up under the awful gloom that had settled down upon us. "You see, Tia Carmen, it isn't with us as it is here—girls are not always presented with strings of pearls when they grow up. It's a very nice custom and ought to be adopted everywhere, I think, but as yet with us it isn't considered absolutely necessary——"

"What do parents give young girls when they make their first appearance in society?" interrupted Tia Carmen severely.

"Oh, all sorts of things," I said vaguely. "Father gave me a borzoi I had seen at a bench show. He was a beauty and I was crazy about him. He died of distemper in England——"

"A dog!" ejaculated Tia Carmen in hollow accents. "Anita, oblige me by looking in the calendar and telling me when Léonor's fête day is."

Anita turned over the pages of a tiny calendar lying on Tia Carmen's desk.

"The twenty-first of this month," she said.

"*Bueno!*" murmured Tia Carmen in a relieved sort of voice.

"Anita," I said, when we were in the carriage again and bowling along toward Chapultepec, "what is a fête day, and why is the twenty-first of this month mine, and why does Tia Carmen want to know about it?"

Anita laughed. "Oh, my dear Eleanor, if you had been born and brought up a Mexican and a Catholic—as you should have been—you wouldn't have had to ask me all these questions. Don't you know that there is a saint for every day of the year and that one celebrates one's saint's day and not one's birthday? The twenty-first of February is Saint Léonor's day, therefore you celebrate it. And as for the reason your aunt is so interested—well, I won't tell you," and Anita smiled enigmatically and aggravatingly as she leaned comfortably back against the cushions.

When we got back to the hotel we found a

characteristically sumptuous bouquet of roses from the *Introduccion de Embajadores* with an invitation to the palace for Saturday, "on the occasion of the presentation of the Persian Ambassador Extraordinary, Sirvez Khan, to the President of the Republic."

Ay di me! The roses, beautiful and fresh as they were, withered before night, because of the abominable custom here of cutting the stems very short and tying the bud to a stick. It is so senseless, so cruel in a land of flowers.

Yours indignantly,

ELEANOR ERNE.

Feb. 8, —.

DEAR "WATCHER OF THE SKIES":

I feel this evening as you would, did you on some milky, starlight night look through your great telescope and suddenly come upon a new world, a brilliant stranger just making his first celestial bow in the Solar Social System.

"Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken."


I am in a fine frenzy, you see, but I will try to make myself comprehended. In plain prose then, I saw for the first time, this morning, Porfirio

Diaz, the most picturesque figure in the world of our day; the man who overtops all other men by virtue both of intention and accomplishment through the fortuitous blending of opportunity and genius; the man who has created a country; who, with his hands and brain, has fashioned the Mexico of to-day. If ever a ruler could say, "*l'état, c'est moi*," Diaz is that ruler; not as the old, doddering, vainglorious French monarch mumbled it, but clearly, thankfully, humbly, with the consciousness that for fifty odd years heart and soul, brain and brawn have been devoted utterly and entirely to the glory and upbuilding of Mexico. When the history of this new "Conquest of Mexico," by Porfirio Diaz, shall have been written, the splendor and achievements of Cortez will pale into insignificance.

There! am I not becoming positively grandiloquent? But then with such an inspiration the temptation is irresistible. By the way, I don't ever remember having waxed eloquent over Bobby.

It was in the great Hall of the Ambassadors at the National Palace that we saw him. The presentation of Sirvez Khan was to take place at eleven, and Anita, Dick, and I started early. I

was desperately anxious not to miss anything and I am afraid I made rather a nuisance of myself hurrying Anita while she was dressing. At a quarter to eleven we arrived at the palace, and at the foot of the broad stairway two of the President's aides met us and escorted us to the Hall of the Ambassadors, a very splendid room running along the front of the palace, its immense windows giving on the Plaza Major. Great crystal chandeliers hung from the beamed ceiling, and facing the windows paintings of Hidalgo, Iturbide, Morelos, Juarez, Washington, and Diaz hung upon the wall. At the end of the room opposite where we entered doors, hidden by velvet curtains, opened into the President's private room. Near these doors stood a group of men known all over Mexico; Mariscal—Dick pointed them out to me—General Cosio, General Mena, and the tall, Gallic-looking José Ives Limantour. Besides these cabinet ministers there were many other notable men among the invited guests—there were no ladies, notable or otherwise, except Anita and myself—and every one was talking animatedly when suddenly a hush descended on the company, which fell back on each side of the long room, and at eleven o'clock exactly the doors at the end of



the room were opened briskly, the velvet curtains pushed aside by an aide in full dress, and Porfirio Diaz entered the room and stood before us. Almost at the same instant the doors at the opposite end of the room were opened and the "Introducer" and General Sirvez appeared. The President took a few steps forward and waited for them to approach.

I was so close to him that I could watch every expression of his face, and as we stood there waiting, the words Lummis wrote of him years ago repeated themselves over and over in my brain: "A man of five feet eight, erect as the Indian he is disproportionately confounded with, quick as the Iberian he far more nearly is, a fine agreement of unusual physical strength and still more unusual grace, with the true Indian trunk and the muscular European limbs, Diaz is physically one man in twenty thousand. There are young old men everywhere, but this is the freshest veteran in my knowledge. By the lithe step, the fine ruddy skin, whose capillaries have not yet learned to clog or knot, by the keen full eye, or the round, flexible voice, it seems a palpable absurdity to pretend that this man has counted not only sixty-seven years, but years of supreme stress. If in

forty of them he ever knew a comforting certainty it must have been by faith and not by sight; for from boyhood to middle life his face was always set against overwhelming odds."

It was with actual difficulty that I looked away from this "freshest veteran" to Sirvez Khan and the "Introducer" who were approaching.

With a few words the "Introducer," who looked more than usually resplendent, presented the Ambassador Extraordinary and then, bowing backward three times, retired to the side lines and obscurity.

Standing there easily, one hand lightly resting on a table beside him, the President listened gravely and courteously to the Ambassador's address, and I wondered with all my might what the Shah of Persia was saying to the President of Mexico—what message the East was sending to the West!

Whatever it was, it seemed to please Diaz, and at its conclusion the Ambassador invested him with the decoration which he had brought from so far, a silver star hanging on a green ribbon.

It glittered very bravely on the President's sombre black coat, but I thought as he glanced down

at it a humorous look flitted for an instant across his face. It may have been my imagination, but decorations—even from Eastern potentates—must seem the veriest trifles to such a man. And then, when he looked up and the magnificent Ambassador Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary had bowed again and moved slightly to one side, he spoke.

I know now what Lummis means when he writes of Diaz's "arrowy speech," of his "unlipped Spanish—the most luminous, direct, sinewy speech I have heard in any tongue." So direct, so forceful was his utterance and gesture that I had the astonished conviction of having grasped the meaning of what he said. Swift in all things, his words of appreciation for the compliment paid him and of welcome to Sirvez Khan, were quickly ended and, with a low bow to the gentlemen about him and a word to young Porfirio Diaz, who had stood just behind his father during the ceremony, he turned away, the velvet curtains were once more lifted, the big doors opened, and in an instant more the audience was at an end.

The "Introducer" hurried up. I looked at him in astonishment. He suddenly seemed to be very small and not at all resplendent. It was

fully half an hour before he regained his normal size. In the meantime, he had introduced General Sirvez and many other doubtless interesting people, but I cannot be sure that they were interesting (I am certain I was not), for my thoughts were still with the wonderful figure that had disappeared behind the velvet curtains. I was still dreaming of the young and obscure Oaxaca lawyer who had risen to be the greatest man of his country and his time.

Dick and Anita are so pleased over my adoring attitude toward Diaz that they are going to arrange immediately to have me presented in due form through the American Ambassador.

Since you display such an astonishing interest in Mr. Whitney, I must tell you what happened yesterday morning. When Lupe arrived with my can of hot water—its size, by the way, has steadily increased with my increasing knowledge of the Spanish idiom—she brought me a letter from him. I can't understand why he wrote me, and I must say his letter gave no very lucid explanation. He never impressed me as being either a nervous man or a man who would discuss his business affairs indiscriminately, and yet the only *raison d'être* of his communication that I can discover

is a sudden, inexplicable anxiety on the subject of my health and a desire to impart the information that he is called to Mexico City on business. The Loughridges will remain at the hacienda, he says, which strikes me as being rather cavalier treatment of his guests. I suppose, however, all ordinary rules of politeness are waived in such an out-of-the-way spot as the Isthmus of Tehuantepec.

But I can't help wondering why he thinks it necessary to inform me of his movements. Our short—and, I'll admit, pleasant—acquaintance seems a long while ago. Lately it seems to me I've been looking at all my former life through the wrong end of an opera-glass—everything seems so far off. I may be nearer than I think, however, and run bang into something.

Pacho usually seems to be the nearest thing and I don't believe he would mind at all if I should run bang into him. In fact, I'm afraid he would like it. He is always hanging around. I should think the marquesa would be dreadfully anxious. Anita is getting distinctly annoyed and warns me solemnly that people are beginning to ask if I keep that youth *dans ma poche*, and that Lermon-toff wants to know whether I have "annexed"


Pacho after the fashion of my country in dealing with things Spanish?

Yours, E. E.

Feb. 12, —.

I am beginning to wonder seriously whether I can be that vulgar-sounding and odious thing—a “hoodoo.” I seem to have successfully made a mess of my own life, but now apparently I am interfering with the elements, much to their detriment.

Monday we were invited to a garden party at the Italian Minister’s. He has a splendid place in Coyoacan, one of the prettiest of the suburbs, and this being the dry season (it has not rained for three months and will not rain for three more) a garden party seemed about as safe a proposition as the Democratic majority in Texas. But when we awoke on the morning of the fatal day the heavens were overcast, and anywhere else one would have ventured the opinion that it was going to rain. Here, however, in the middle of the dry season, such an assumption was too monstrous to be entertained. So at four o’clock Anita and I, in our prettiest afternoon gowns, started for Coyoacan in the open carriage—one



would as soon think of ordering a sleigh in New York in June as a closed carriage in the dry season here—and just as we reached the Forli's it began to pour!

On stepping out of the carriage at the door an extraordinary scene presented itself to our already sufficiently bewildered eyes. Unsuspecting guests who had innocently strolled off into the beautiful gardens were scampering back to the house from every direction in most undignified haste, and when we reached the drawing-room we found it full of people wandering dazedly about, almost too overcome by the indecent capriciousness of the weather to murmur "How d'y do?" It certainly was a curious freak of nature—or is a garden-party the freak? I haven't yet quite decided in my mind.

Of course, Pacho and Lermontoff and the Oriental Express were all there, and late in the afternoon Arthur Chiswold and several other young Englishmen came in and we danced a little. Arthur Chiswold is a delightful dancer, Lermontoff, lazy and blasé, rarely dances, but by far the best of all is Pacho. We had a heavenly waltz to *Las Golondrinas*. I got positively sentimental while we were dancing, and Pacho had

such a blissful expression on his face that I began to think that the time had surely come "to speak of many things"—to tell him that I was that impossible creature from a matrimonial point of view, a dowerless young lady. I was just wondering how I could neatly get it in when up came his uncle, the Marques de Galvaez, to tell me that the rain had stopped and would I show him the gardens? The marques is a most immaculate little old gentleman who affects white spats and a monocle and is inordinately proud of his blue eyes and blond hair, which are seen only among the Spanish aristocracy. I am quite sure the marquesa, who was sitting on a sofa, decked in the rubies for which she is famous and glowering at Pacho and me as we swung around, had sent him. He didn't seem to mind being sent at all, I must say, and paid me such extravagant compliments and was generally so *empresé* that I couldn't help thinking that if the marquesa continued being so exquisitely disagreeable and glowery, it would be easy enough to give her something to glower about.

We had just successfully reached the farthermost end of the gardens when it began to rain again in torrents. There was nothing for it but to run,

even if one were an elderly marques and a minister, and I must say the white spats made very good time getting to the house. But even as we fled the poor old marques refused to believe the evidence of his astonished senses and kept muttering breathlessly, "*mais c'est incroyable, mais c'est incroyable!*"

It didn't seem *incroyable* to me at all, only disagreeably real, especially as the marques insisted on putting his arm around my shoulder—to help me along, he said. I kept telling him I didn't need help and I was so furious that I even tried to shake it off, but he didn't pay the least attention to me and kept up quite easily with the lively pace I set. At the door we ran into Boris who was standing there imperturbably, as though torrents of rain in the dry season were a familiar phenomenon to him, and who remarked that if the marques and I had been a little more picturesquely clothed, we would have looked like a fair imitation of "Before the Storm."

Behind Lermontoff stood the marquesa anxiously looking out into the gardens, and when she caught sight of us her expression was such that, in spite of my anger against the marques, I couldn't help feeling some sympathy and anxiety for

him. I'm sure he got the Spanish equivalent of a curtain lecture that night!

My love of a white chiffon hat is ruined and I'm afraid I'll have to go for another one at that terribly dear shop where one pays appalling sums for things. Reduction to a gold basis never consoles me for the terrifying sound of Mexican currency.

E. E.

Feb. 14, —.

It has, at last, occurred to Anita that I am frivolling away my days in social pleasures and am making no effort to see any of the interesting sights of this wonderful old city, and she demands that I devote some small portion of the twenty-four hours to instructive expeditions. She intimates in veiled terms that my knowledge of Mexican history is deplorably inadequate, and I intimate openly that I am quite indifferent on the subject. She says that my father will be seriously angry when he arrives to find that I have visited none of the places of interest in and near Mexico City, and I say that I have never seen him seriously angry except on the subject of international marriage settlements, and do not believe he will

mind a little thing like my not having seen the well in which Cortez drowned his wife, or the statue to Huitzilopochtli, the god of war. We spent an entire delightful afternoon—in which we could have done any one of fifty frivolous and amusing things—arguing the matter and then I gave up, only stipulating that we should not rush at the business of sight-seeing, but take it by degrees as simply as possible, and always sandwiched in between two enjoyable occasions that will leave me no time either for gloomy anticipation or unavailing regret.

It was probably to prevent anticipation that Anita announced quite suddenly yesterday morning that we would go to Guadalupe as soon as breakfast was over. I had an engagement to walk in the Alameda with Pachó and listen to the military band which is admirable, but Anita disposed of that by remarking that we would take Pachó with us.

"It is always useful to have a man with us," she said, her tone as impersonal as though she had been speaking of smelling-salts or a sunshade.

We started at ten, Pachó and I in rather a depressed frame of mind, but Anita glowing with that virtuous contentment which arises from duty

however unpleasant, performed. I am quite sure that she did not want to go to Guadalupe any more than we did—her Catholicism is of the made-to-order variety and only to please Dick—but the consciousness that she was doing her duty by me upheld and cheered her.

As we spun northward on the road to Guadalupe in the motor Anita endeavored to prepare my mind for the glories I was to see, and in spite of my disinclination either to acquire knowledge or to have knowledge thrust upon me, I found myself gradually becoming interested in her story of Juan Diego, the poor Indian to whom Our Lady of Guadalupe appeared. It was evident that Anita's attitude toward the legend which she recited glibly, was artistic rather than religious, but Pacho was so obviously and firmly convinced of its truth that I found myself rather longing to believe too. It must be delightful to have faith in such pretty stories—to embellish and soften the austerity of one's religious convictions with such sweetly familiar beliefs. When one can honestly and fervently believe that the Virgin appeared three times to a poor, ignorant Indian, speaking to him, giving him a service to perform and signs of her divine condescension,

how easy and simple to believe that her Son walked upon earth and spake with men and died for them!

The church of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe was as wonderful as Anita and Pacho had said. For one moment I stood speechless, almost breathless, at the entrance gazing on its glories—at the white Carrara marble and gilded bronze high altar where the carven images of saints kneel at their perpetual devotions, and above which hangs the miraculous picture of the Virgin vouchsafed to Juan Diego; at the massive silver railing about the chancel, at the gorgeous frescoes and rich chapels and mellow glass windows. And then, as my eyes and senses became accustomed to the costly splendor of it all, I suddenly fell to wondering whether this magnificent church, built by the labor of countless weary *peons*, enriched by gold and silver and precious stones borne from the mines of Mexico upon the straining backs of wretched Indians toiling through the ages, was, after all, such a “temple” as the Virgin had commanded Juan Diego to raise to her glory and honor.

Apparently no such doubt has ever assailed Pacho, for he told me that this church to Our

Lady of Guadalupe was the holiest and most frequented shrine in Mexico, and he showed me all its glories with the greatest pride. Especially did he want me to see the wonderful crown—the richest jewel used in religious ceremonies in the world—suspended above the pictured image of the Virgin on the high altar. He had seen the coronation himself a few years ago, and told me that the marquesa, who with other of the wealthy women of Mexico had given of their most precious jewels for the crown, had been one of those chosen to bear it to the throne of the archbishop.

As he talked I could see the scene: the clouds of incense, the choir chanting anthems, the bishops and archbishops in their most gorgeous ecclesiastical raiment waiting to receive the priceless gift, the excited, swaying crowd of devotees, the booming of cannon and the ringing of bells, and above it all, aloof, wan, faintly smiling, the miraculous pictured image of the Virgin.

I stumbled out of the dim, religious light, dazzled but not awed, and I think, in spite of all the magnificence and beauty of the great church of Our Lady of Guadalupe, I like best the little Chapel of the Hill above it—La Capella del Cerito—and the quiet flowery cemetery where re-

poses in peace at last that restless spirit, Santa Ana. And above all did I like the wonderful stone stairway leading up to it from the plain and the strange stone sails forever set toward the shrine of the Virgin, and "the magnificent panorama that grows wider at every step till it spreads out in one grand, glorious picture, the like of which is nowhere else in the world." It was when I stood on the topmost step and looked down upon the slender towers of Guadalupe, at the long, level roadway leading back to the city that loomed up mistily white in the distance, at the plain stretching away broken by blue lakes and viaducts, and at the snow-capped mountains on the far horizon—it was then that I felt like falling down and worshipping.

We came back quietly—sobered by what we had seen, and I thought I had never found Pacho so likable, with a strange, new touch of dignity about him lent him by unwonted silence.

I find myself continually wondering about Pacho, trying to explain satisfactorily to myself how it comes about that so pleasant, entirely nice and winning a youth should be so vile—for I call it vile for a young, able-bodied man to fill his days with idle pleasures instead of working out the

salvation of his soul and body; to order his life and its desires and ambitions according to the caprices of another; to owe everything to the generosity of a rich woman. When I dance with him he seems altogether admirable and for the time being I cease to criticise and only enjoy, but then comes the end of the waltz and disapproval again, and I try to imagine a nice American in his position. But really I can't—it's unthinkable. Francis Whitney, for instance! Fancy him accepting stingy checks doled out by a rich old woman with a nasty temper.

Your perplexed

ELEANOR.

Feb. 16, —.

The inevitable has happened! Pachó has proposed. It happened last night at a dinner—don't be too astonished and disgusted—given by the German Minister and his wife, Baron and Baroness von Kleinberg, at Coyoacan. It was a gay dinner—not very large, but if the poor baroness had done it on purpose she couldn't have got together a stranger assortment of human beings, and when everybody talked at my end of the table it resembled nothing so much as the Tower of Babel. The Vicomte de Cinqueville took me in,

and although he is the French *chargé* here, he doesn't speak a word of English, which certainly is strange. When I sat down I found Pacho was on the other side of me, and he had taken in a fat Mexican señorita of uncertain age with a dawning mustache and enormous pearls hanging from her everywhere, who didn't speak a word of English either. I thought this awfully strange, too, as nearly all the Mexicans I have met here speak English well, until Pacho explained to me that he had selected her on purpose! Beyond her around the end of the table sat Merighi of the Italian Legation, whose English is of the Ollendorfish sort, and next to him the Baroness von Kleinberg. On her right was the Persian Ambassador, and sandwiched in between him and Lermontoff—who looked *terriblement ennuyé*—sat the Fräulein von Kleinberg, the baron's sister, a plump and comfortable looking person, pretty in a placid *Hausfrau* kind of way and unmistakably Teutonic, from her flaxen hair that grows in a youthful straggly sort of way about her temples, to the tips of her not small feet. I could just imagine how antipathetic such attractions were to Lermontoff who likes "temperamental" women, and I couldn't help smiling wickedly every time I looked over

at him, neatly trapped, and thought how bored he must be by the banalities the little Fräulein was deluging him with—he who has a talent amounting to genius for escaping social boredom and putting upon others the disagreeable social duties he does not care to perform!

Dick and Anita were at the other end of the table and, of course, separated as far as possible from each other, owing to the popular prejudice which prevents a husband and wife from having anything to do with each other at a social function, when any other man, no matter how uninteresting or inferior to the husband, can be found to take his place *pro tem*.

There were lovely things to eat, everybody was very gay, and the conversation was quite exciting—like a sort of lingual *pousse café* with a layer of German and a dash of French and a streak of Spanish on top of that, and then maybe a snatchy bit of English or Italian. It quite went to one's head—at least, it seemed to go to Pacho's head, or, perhaps, it was a great goblet of champagne he drank. At any rate, he got more and more sentimental until at last, knowing that neither de Cinqueville nor the fat señorita could understand him, he began to say the most sickly tender things,

and when I tried to hush him up, he just cast common prudence to the winds and proposed then and there in a fierce undertone that would have been funny if I hadn't been so furious with him.

I could have murdered him, especially when I looked up and saw Lermontoff gazing at us with a cynical smile and the Persian Ambassador almost convulsed. I suppose I must have looked rather piteous, for the latter suddenly stopped talking to the baroness and devoted himself to me, cutting off Pacho's stream of sentimental nonsense in the most effectual and unceremonious way, and the fat señorita, seeing her chance at Pacho—he had hardly spoken a word to her—began a rapid monologue, fixing him with her glittering eye like the Ancient Mariner.

It was really rather neat the way Sirvez Khan came to my rescue and I felt tremendously grateful. But I couldn't think of a thing to say to him, and I began wishing with all my might that I had made a special study of Persia at college, or, at least, that father and I had ventured there in our wanderings. As it was I couldn't lay my mental finger on a single fact connected with that unhappy country except, of course, poor Omar, and I tried to recollect, with a frenzy born

of desperation, whether Teheran or Bagdad or Shiraz could, by any lucky geographical chance, be the capital, and what language the natives spoke and what might be their religion. I had a dim notion that Persians were Parsees and I remembered a picture I had seen somewhere of Oriental-looking creatures costumed in flowing garments worshipping a geometrically round and an enormously large sun that was bursting in spiky radiance from behind a mountain. But what the nationality of those enthusiastic early risers was I couldn't for the life of me recollect. They might conceivably have been Persians, but glancing at Sirvez Khan's immaculate evening dress adorned by a ribbon upon which hung a blazing jewel, I hastily concluded that he, at least, could never have arisen at any untoward hour to worship the sun. He looked much more like a *boulevardier* than a fire-worshipper.

While I was pondering these things, he was leaning forward talking to me. He spoke English in my honor—I meant to speak it myself when I could think of anything to say.

"I hear you have travelled much, Mademoiselle," he was saying. "Have you ever visited my country?"

"No," I replied, smiling brilliantly and in a tone which I hoped would convey the impression that it had been a mere oversight on my part and that I would be starting for Persia at the earliest convenient moment.

Boris leaned across the table. "I am astonished," he said gravely, but his eyes looked wicked—he was really terribly bored by the Fräulein von Kleinberg—"Miss Erne is a great traveller."

"I am as great a traveller as Count Lermontoff is a cynic," I said, also very gravely.

The ambassador smiled. "Am I to understand that Count Lermontoff is not a cynic?"

"He is no more a real cynic than he is a real Russian," I replied. "And you know he can't be a real Russian, for his name is Scotch. It used to be Lermont until the poet of the family made it famous and added the 'off.'"

Lermontoff was genuinely astonished, and I thanked my lucky stars that even if I hadn't studied up Persia at college, I had taken a course in Russian lit.

"Miss Erne is even more erudite than I had thought," he said, smiling and showing his wonderfully even, white teeth. "It is quite true—I am part Scotch, and although I confess I had

rather all my ancestors had been Russians, still I don't at all dislike my Scottish ones. There is a sensible French proverb—one of the few sensible ones alas!—that I have always tried to shape my life by and that says: 'si on n'a pas ce qu'on aime, il faut aimer ce qu'on a,'" and he looked steadily into my eyes for a moment and then turned with as great a show of *empressement* as he ever allows himself to Fräulein von Kleinberg, whose placid stream of talk had been so rudely interrupted.

"That seems a cowardly sort of philosophy to me," I said impartially. Boris looked back at me, and Fräulein von Kleinberg, who had resumed her monologue, was cut off again.

"Cowardly?"

"Yes—cowardly," I said quite distinctly. "Such lack of tenacity of purpose, such easy substitutions of one desire for another, such a pruning of one's ambition to fit one's circumstances, are cowardly. When I want a thing I want that thing and nothing else, and I want it with my whole soul."

Lermontoff smiled. "Oh, youth, youth!" he said teasingly. "That is a most childish sentiment, Miss Erne. Never, dear young lady, allow

yourself to want a thing very much—you will surely be disappointed. Maintain a calm—a *ça me laisse absolument froid*—attitude and then you may stand some chance of getting what you want in this world of chances. But to desire a thing ardently—it is the surest way of losing it altogether.”

There was nothing to say. Do I not know that Lermontoff is right? For a moment I thought with bitterness of Bobby. But I am determined not to be bitter. I shall not let the remembrance of what one man has done poison my life. Bitter thoughts are but poor and dishonest companions, stealing from us what is best in life.

“But,” I said aloud, “there is such a thing as doing without. ‘*Si on n’a pas ce qu’on aime, on peut s’en passer*’ sounds to me a better working sentiment than yours.”

But Lermontoff only shook his head, grinning derisively.

“I wonder if it would be futile to wish that people here understood my name better?” put in the ambassador plaintively. “I find myself continually being addressed or introduced as General Sirvez Khan. Now Khan means General, so you see how very odd it sounds to me.”

"Is that magnificent jewel a reward for your military services, General?" asked Anita.

"It was given me by my master, the Shah," he replied, and detaching it from its ribbon, he handed the glittering thing to Anita. She gave a cry of admiration.

"But it is beautiful!" and she passed it to her neighbor. When it got round to me I saw that it was a small miniature of the Shah set round with a double row of magnificent diamonds that sparkled fiercely under the lights.

"I am saving it for my wife. I shall give it as my first present to her when I find her," said Sirvez Khan impressively, looking hard at me. I hastily handed the bauble to the fat señorita.

"Your wife?" asked Fräulein von Kleinberg sentimentally.

"Yes—my wife. Our religion allows us four" (oh, of course, Mohammedan! how stupid of me, I thought), "but I shall never have but one," and he fixed his heavy, black eyes on me.

Really, don't you think that was a little *too* much? Fancy taking *that* home to poor father as a substitute for Lord Bobby. *Mieux vaut le dot!* And Pacho on the other side of me glowering and snapping out short things in Spanish at the poor

señorita, who didn't know at all what was going on. I assure you I was heartily glad when the dinner was over and we got out on the *corridor*. But I didn't have a good time long, for it was so chilly that everybody went in, and just as I was going too, Pacho came and sat down beside me and began talking wildly again. So I just had it out with him and told him of my dowerless state, and oh, my dear Philosopher, as I talked you ought to have seen how the ardent flame of his affections sputtered and went out like a spent candle in a draught! Ay di me! To say that he was surprised and disappointed is to put it mildly. Perhaps the night air had cooled his ardor, and he was already figuring to himself the anger of his aunt; or, perhaps, the awful picture I painted of a life with me *sans le sous* reduced him to reason; any way, after a very few protests he accepted the situation philosophically and although he talked a lot of nonsense, I could see that he really was tremendously relieved. I shall not worry about him a bit. He's a very nice *cigale* and if we could have danced through life he might have done, but for "steady company"—oh, no!

While he was floundering around in a sea of banalities about broken hearts and eternal devo-

tion and the higher friendships, etc., out came Lermontoff and I was certainly glad to see him. He put Pachó to rout, who went off with a melancholy look at me that would have been devastating if genuine.

"'Alas! poor Yorick,'" murmured Lermontoff under his breath.

"What a delightful time you had at dinner," I retorted sweetly. "I could see how pretty and interesting you thought *Fräulein von Kleinberg*."

"She reminds me of nothing so much as an amiable cook," he said tranquilly. I was rather shocked at such an ill-natured remark and said so. It occurred to me afterward that I had thought pretty much the same thing when I had mentally styled her a pleasing *Hausfrau* sort of person, but it sounded so much worse to say it. Such a gulf is there between our thoughts and our remarks!

"You were so *empresse* I thought you must have fallen in love with her."

"Love! love!" exclaimed Boris, "what does a child like you know of love?" and he turned upon me for an instant a face I had never seen before—a face distorted with the pain of some remembered passion.

"I am not sure I do know what you mean by love and I do not think I want to," I said hastily.

For a moment he was silent. "Nor for worlds would I have you know, dear young lady," he said finally in a strangely kind voice, and then he added in his usual cynical manner, "for such favored mortals as yourself and other American young girls, before whom all men bow, love is only a very soft, a very delicate and happy thing. Haven't you a saying about your 'head saving your heels'? Well, it always seemed to me that your heads save your hearts."

"You are very clever, Count Lermontoff, to say such knowing things about our heads and our hearts. You remind me of what the great Coquelin once said to me: '*Les jeunes filles américaines sont comme les épingles—elles se retrouvent toujours par la tête!*'"

He laughed a little. "That's good," he said. "The Lord knew what he was doing when he placed your hearts below your heads."

I clapped my hands. "Better and better!" I cried. "I can feel my head expanding and my heart contracting this minute under your raillery, and that is a much safer and pleasanter sensa-

tion than to feel one's head contracting and one's heart expanding, let me tell you."

"Has your heart ever really expanded, dear young lady?" he asked doubtfully, leaning toward me in the moonlight.

For an instant a wild desire swept over me to tell this strange man about Bobby, but common sense forbade.

"That," I said, after a moment's hesitation, "is a question you are not privileged to ask me and which I shall not answer, Count Lermontoff. But this I will tell you: American girls have as much heart as your gusty, temperamental Latin women; only our morals—I didn't say religion—and our intellect being more developed as a rule, we are better balanced. Your emotional Continental woman adores floundering around in a sea of passion, and usually sinks to the bottom with a terrible splashing and choking, but the American girl is a good swimmer and keeps her head above water."

"So that she can better see the admiration she is arousing by her ladylike aquatic performance, doubtless," suggested Lermontoff.

"Exactly, and that is much more sensible than making a spectacle of herself and endangering

the lives of two or three men—I understand that there are always at least two—who go to her rescue.”

“My dear young lady, I really did not dream that you had read so much!”

But even this taunt did not make me talk of Bobby.


“You see,” I continued severely, “the American girl is usually acutely and rather humorously aware that there are many other interesting things in this world besides love. A night like this, for instance,” I said, getting up and going to the edge of the balcony. “Why, in the name of all that is sensible, should we be discussing love when we have a scene like this to look at?”

It was a heavenly night—cold as always here after the sun sets, and clear with shining stars and a big silver moon. In the distance across the silent plain Snow Mountain rose, wanly white and luminous. Beneath us in dense shadow lay the garden, from which floated up a thousand delicious odors of fragrant, growing things, and I confess that out there under the stars, in the night silence, I felt more religious than I had in the great church of Our Lady of Guadalupe, with

the images of departed saints and the miraculous *tilma* before me.

E. E.

P. S.—Are you bored and disgusted with all this scrappy gossip of dinner parties and proposals of marriage and earthly vanities generally, you who live among the stars? If you are, be thankful, at least, that I have spared you so much I might have told. There are heaps of things I don't tell you—we are going all the time, it seems to me—and if I hadn't the constitution of a race horse I would be tired, I suppose. Anyway, you do show a most human and satisfactory interest in my frivolities usually, and oh, yes, I had another note from Mr. Whitney, yesterday, and he is to arrive to-morrow and I do really think that Mr. Finding's brother is as nice as he is. A little older and graver, but a charming man who shows a most flattering interest in me and my affairs. He seems to like to hear me talk of my college life, and I have told him of it and, of course, I have had to talk of you. Do you mind? I hope not, for I have not only talked of you but I have even shown him your photograph. It was the



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other day when he called. He looked at it for quite a while and said it reminded him of an old friend of his.

E.

HOTEL DE LA PASEO, *Feb. 17, —.*

It is some horribly late hour and I am petrified with sleepiness, but I must scribble you a line. We have just got back from the opera. It was "La Bohême" and the soprano was so fat and wheezed dreadfully! It seems that singers have a hard time here on account of the altitude, and many of them arrive before the season begins and try to get acclimated. But the rarefied air makes nearly all of them awfully short of breath. The tenor gasped two or three times to-night like a fish out of water and I did feel sorry for him. There were six of us and we had a very good box—Dick and Anita and the Ambassador and Mrs. Finding and Francis Whitney and myself.

Mr. Whitney appeared suddenly at tea time this afternoon. I had forgotten how very good-looking he is. It is nice to see people who seem so genuinely glad to see you—only he seemed a little too glad, I thought. I do hope he is not going to make love to me. I've got past all

that sort of thing and only want to be left in peace.


After the opera we went to the famous Sylvan's and had supper in a private dining-room that gave on a patio where the musicians were playing delicious bits from the operas. It was fun to peep out from between the velvet curtains at them and the crowds in the café below stairs. I caught a glimpse of Lermontoff at a table with a beautiful girl. She was so very pretty and exquisitely gowned that I asked Anita who she was, but Anita seemed unaccountably annoyed and said she had never seen her before and that I was positively not to ask Lermontoff about her, and it was awfully late when we left and—but I'm really too sleepy to write.

Asleep or awake, as always,

E. E.

HOTEL DE LA PASEO, *Feb. 19, —.*


Did you ever spend Sunday afternoon at a bullfight with a Mohammedan, dear Star-Gazer? That's what I did yesterday. It hardly sounds respectable, does it? I wish I could see grandma's face when I tell her! It was all unpremeditated, I assure you. I had been to the dear little English Church here with Mr. Whitney in



the morning, and when we got back to the hotel, we found Count Forli—you remember he was the one who had the eccentric garden party—in the drawing-room with Anita. She was looking a little vexed and undecided, and it is so unlike her to look either way that I wondered what the matter could be. We weren't left in the dark a moment though, for directly we got in Forli began at me to say I would go to the bull-fight party he was getting up that afternoon in honor of the Persian Ambassador. It seems that this was to be the last bull-fight of the season and that Reverte, the greatest of Mexican matadors, was leaving for an indefinite stay in Spain, and Sirvez Khan had especially asked for me to be present, and Count Forli said he would consider his party a failure if we declined and a lot more complimentary things. So finally I said I wanted dreadfully to go, although I saw by Anita's face that she was against it—she never goes to bull-fights—and as for Mr. Whitney, he was looking disapproval as hard as he could. However it was none of his affair, and after a little more persuasion Anita gave in and said we would go. Count Forli seemed delighted and asked Mr. Whitney to join the party, and although he had looked so cross

about it, he changed his expression like lightning and accepted. I thought it extremely inconsistent and told him so when the count had left, but he only laughed in a rather aggravating way.

At half after two the "Introducer" drove up for us and Anita and I went with him in his victoria, while Dick and Mr. Whitney followed in the motor. His horses are superb and we fairly pranced out the Paseo to the Plaza de Toros. The "Introducer" proved to be most entertaining and told me a lot about bull-fights and bull-fighters on the way out. It seems that most of the gilded youth of Mexico go in for amateur bull-fighting just as young men learn boxing or fencing with us, and they invite the great matadors to their haciendas and keep them there sometimes for weeks on end while they are learning. He said he knew the great Reverte very well and a lot of the others who were going to perform that afternoon. When we got to the entrance of the bull-ring he made his coachman drive a certain way and we passed quite close to where the matadors stood waiting and I got a good look at Reverte. His pale, cameo-like face reminds one of Napoleon and he has the most splendid dark eyes I ever saw. Altogether he is as unlike



as possible the common bull-fighters one sees continually on the streets with their brutal faces and their pig-tails tucked up under gray felt hats. To Reverte's magnificent looks there is added a glacial courtesy of manner which I thought was a heritage from some "sporting" Castilian ancestor until I heard the "Introducer" tell Anita that he was the son of his Mexican laundress!

After lots of climbing we got up to our box, which was one of a row all around the top of the bull-ring. Below us sat perfect hordes of people—the expensive seats *sombra* and the cheap ones *sol*—all impatiently waiting the gates to be thrown open and the play to begin. Count and Countess Forli with the Persian Ambassador and the Chilean Minister and his wife—Señor and Señora Guerrero—had already arrived and when our party came in the box was quite crowded.

Anita and I had planned to make ourselves as inconspicuous as possible and to take back seats and escape after the first bull had been killed—there were to be eight; but the men made us sit right down in front, and as for getting out I don't believe wild horses could have dragged a one of them away except, of course, Francis Whitney. But naturally I wouldn't let *him* take me away—it

would have been such a triumph!—although I did feel horribly ill, especially when the picadors came in. The men wouldn't let us look then, and heaven knows none of us wanted to except the Señora Guerrero who pretended to be overcome with disgust; but all the time she was uttering little squeaks of fright she was looking as hard as possible through her black lace fan *à jour*, and I am sure she saw quite well everything that was going on.

In the midst of all the excitement Reverte suddenly turned in our direction and standing in the arena bowed low to the Persian Ambassador and dedicated the bull to him. At the same instant his hat was passed up over the heads of the cheering crowd to our box to be held by the Ambassador and incidentally to be filled with presents or money.

I'm sure we couldn't have been more conspicuous if we had been in the middle of the bull-ring ourselves, and even Sirvez Khan seemed to feel a moment of embarrassment at the attentions of the twenty thousand spectators, and hastily scribbling an appointment for the next morning, fastened his card in the matador's hat and sent it down.

In spite of the absolute nausea I experienced at sight of Reverte's dreadful play with the enraged bull, I couldn't help but be fascinated by

the coolness and science with which he used his weapon, and the wonderful strength and agility with which he finally buried the *espada* in the quivering neck of the poor brute which dropped to its knees. I thought all was over, but with a supreme effort he regained his feet and dragged himself feebly for a few yards along the barrier. That was the most pathetic episode in that sickening drama—that short march of death, quite passive and quiet now, his bursting heart beating slower and slower, his conqueror walking beside him with watchful eye but lowered point, content with his work, sure of his victim.

I looked away with a little groan, and Mr. Whitney, who was just behind me, took me forcibly by the arm, and without a word pushed aside some of the chairs and led me out onto the balcony that runs around the ring back of the boxes. I couldn't speak, even to thank him, for fear I should cry, but I could hear him muttering under his breath, "what a detestable sight for women!" At least, I think he said "detestable."

I wanted to say: "Yes, indeed!" only I didn't dare, so we just stood there without talking. Suddenly he touched my arm and I looked up, and there, far to the south-east, gloriously shining


in the afternoon sun, I saw the snowy tops of Popocatepetl and Istaccihuatl, the "White Lady." It was my first good view of the two volcanoes, for, as the dry season advances, the air in the city gets full of dust and by March one is lucky to be able to see them at all.

We stood there watching the beautiful mountains while they butchered the rest of the eight bulls in the ring below, and finally, when it was all over, Anita came out looking quite as ill as I had felt. The Persian Ambassador, after having forgotten my existence for an hour, suddenly became enormously *empressé*, and begged Anita and me to go back with him in his carriage, but before Anita could speak I told him sweetly that we were much obliged, but that we had promised to go with Mr. Whitney. Anita was so cross with the whole thing that she didn't care how she got back, but Mr. Whitney was so obviously astonished and delighted at this little *improvisation* that I'm sure Sirvez Khan suspected something.

Your degenerate

E. E.

P. S.—If you really want to know what a bull-fight is like, read that wonderful book about



Spain, by Katherine Lee Bates. Anyway, it looks just like the second act of "Carmen," so you can see it the next time you go to the opera.


P. P. S.—Don't you think Mr. Whitney is a man of sense? He didn't presume at all upon the fact that I had deliberately told a fib and chosen him to take us home, but seemed to understand that it wasn't *him*, but just any plain, reliable American I wanted, for really I couldn't stand any more Mohammedans or bull-fighters or things just then. Imagine how the "Introducer" or Pachó or Sirvez Khan would have taken it!—any one of them would have immediately concluded that I was madly in love with him.

Thursday, Feb. 22, —.

Yesterday was Ash Wednesday and my saint's day. Tia Carmen would have given me a big dinner-dance at San Angel if it hadn't been for that unfortunate combination, but it will now have to be put off until Lent is over. I got that bit of information in a note accompanying a ravishing string of pearls which Tia Carmen sent me yesterday. I was dreadfully sleepy in the morning, having been up late the night before at a dinner and *musicale* at the Spanish Legation,

and Lupe had a hard time waking me. Finally, I managed to make out that she had something more than the usual can of hot water for me, and when I really opened my eyes and saw her standing by the bed with a note and an interesting looking white box in her hand, I woke up in a jiffy. While she was throwing open the long windows, I tore off the paper wrapper and opened the box, and there, coiled up on the white satin, lay the loveliest string of pearls! They were so big and beautifully matched that I couldn't help thinking of Lothair and his "ropes of pearls" that he distributed about so carelessly. In the note Tia Carmen said it was the string she had intended for her own dear Léonor who had died, and that the moment she saw me she had wanted me to have them, and when she discovered that father had been so incredibly negligent as not to provide me with any, why that settled the matter.

As soon as I could get pitched into my clothes, I rushed into Anita's room to show her the pearls and suggest that we go right out to San Angel, but she said that Tia Carmen is so devout that she always goes into retirement on Ash Wednesday and that I must send a note and call this afternoon.



I'm rather glad Lent is here, for really I was getting a little tired. Dozens of things have happened in the last few days with people rushing up dinner-parties and dances at the last minute so as to get them in before Ash Wednesday. And you never saw so many people getting married in all your life. All the engaged couples who suddenly decided they couldn't wait until Easter had to hurry things up at the last minute. It was quite gay going along the streets to see the bridal carriages dashing up to the churches, with big white bows on the coachman's whip and bouquets of white flowers sticking out of the windows and a simpering bride and scared looking groom inside. And then right after the ceremony it is *de rigueur* to go to the photographer's and get bridal pictures taken, so that San Francisco Street looked *en fête* all Monday and Tuesday.

Did you know that down here it is the custom, even among the best and wealthiest people, for the groom to pay for the bride's trousseau? I think that must be a very strange and sufficiently disagreeable sensation for the poor groom who, of course, has to look pleasant and can't even have the satisfaction of scolding about the cost of a frock or hat. Sometimes if the bride-to-be

or his prospective mother-in-law is extravagant the poor man gets into real financial difficulties. I heard of one man here whose mother-in-law bought her daughter a magnificent trousseau, and the poor groom was years paying for it and got so exasperated finally that he divorced his wife and lived happily ever after.

The girls do wear beautiful things here, most of them straight from Paris, and, of course, the wedding trousseau is always very elaborate. I saw a beautiful one on Tuesday. Anita has a friend here, Señorita Carlota de Alarcon, who was to have been married last week, but unfortunately a forty-fifth cousin or something died and so, as she did not want a dull wedding and mourning, she put off the whole thing and will wear black during Lent and then burst out in her gay clothes at Easter. She hadn't been able to call on account of her mourning, but she sent Anita an invitation to come and see her trousseau, and as Anita said she undoubtedly had lovely things she decided to go and take me, although it seemed a rather funny proceeding to me. It is the correct thing here when calling on any one in mourning to put on black one's self that one may appear properly sympathetic, so Anita dressed herself in a


black silk she has and had her maid let out some tucks in a pretty black silk mull of hers so that it would do for me and we started out. I had been by the house frequently, but as the side toward the street was only plain stucco with a big, high fence all around it, I had not noticed it much. But when the gates were opened and we went in I was enchanted. The gardens were superb with great masses of bougainvillea growing everywhere and the house was charming—very modern and built like a French one, without a patio and with a lovely *perron* and an enclosed, tessellated marble piazza. The drawing-room was a splendid apartment filled with beautiful furniture and Dresden vases and art objects of every sort.

The trousseau was shown in a little room off the library, and when we entered I couldn't help giving a little gasp, for it was just like a display of model gowns at the Plaza or Waldorf by some *grande couturière* from Paris. The dresses were hung up, showing to great advantage beneath the electric lights, and even the gloves and shoes and opened parasols to match lay beside them. Everything had come from Paris and they were so lovely and gay that it was like the incarnation of spring-time. Señorita Alarcon is an exceed-

ingly pretty girl, one of the very prettiest I have seen here, tall and dark, and she did look lovely in some of the hats she tried on for us. They were all as chic and expensive as possible I am sure, and quite as pretty as anything Cécile or Rosine ever made for me.

While we were looking at the things I had noticed a detached sort of young man prowling about, but I was too interested in the clothes to bother much with wondering who he could be. But just as we were going Señorita Alarcon called him up and introduced him, and would you believe it? *he* was the groom, the young man who had paid for all those lovely things! I suppose he was trying to get his money's worth, taking a sort of vicarious pleasure by watching the raptures of Carlota's friends, but I thought it rather cool of her to treat him so, don't you? I can't just imagine any American allowing himself to be side-tracked that way.

Speaking of sentimental things, did you know that there really is such a custom here as "playing bear"? I always thought that it was one of those things one heard about and that were popularly supposed to exist, but which had no foundation in fact. But it is really a national custom



and flourishes to-day, and I have actually seen with my own eyes a Mexican youth "playing bear" to a young lady in a pink stucco house a few blocks down the Paseo. Lermontoff had told me that there were *novios* there, and that the young man went to gaze at his inamorata every day at eleven in the morning and six in the evening, and, animated by what I fear was vulgar curiosity, I determined to investigate. So Mr. Whitney and I strolled by there on Monday afternoon.

By the way, it is enormously convenient having him here, for, as he is an *Americano*, I can walk with him in the Paseo or in the Alameda without scandalizing the natives. I went for a stroll in the Alameda with Pachó once, and everybody must have seen me—one young Mexican girl who lives in a house that gives on the park told me frankly that she had seen me go in, and had watched me through an opera-glass! Isn't it ridiculous for a grown person like myself, a college graduate, and a sensible creature, I hope, to have to pay attention to such things? But I suppose down here if one is forty and unmarried, even though one's hair is turning gray and one's teeth falling out, one has to "play the

game." I can't make out what is so dangerous about these foreigners. To me they seem like very commonplace and unexciting creatures for the most part.

But to return to our muttons—bears, I should say. Mr. Whitney and I strolled down the Paseo about six o'clock Monday afternoon, and there "sure enough," stood a youth on the corner looking up at an almost invisible young lady behind a barred window in the second story of the pink stucco house. To us Anglo-Saxons speech is especially esteemed because it serves as a means of concealing our thoughts and feelings, the great desideratum with us, and how anybody can stand silently examining his emotions, laying them bare to his own inspection and the gaze of a young woman with whom he has never exchanged a word passes my comprehension. A peep now and then at Love might be delightful, but how two unacquainted people can stare the little god out of countenance is more than I can understand. I should think he would run away altogether and never come back. What I chiefly can't understand is how that particular young man found out that he loved or was going to love that particular young lady without ever knowing her, or even

speaking to her. He must be a perfect Christopher Columbus of the emotions to have discovered it! The whole thing seems dreadfully *bête* to me. For my part if a handsome young man of unknown disposition and brains should take to silently staring at me by the hour through a barred window, I would gently lean out some fine night while he was at it and pour ice-water down on his head!

You see that romance is dead in

Your devoted

E. E.

Feb. 24, —.

DEAR STAR-GAZER:

Do come down to earth for a few moments while I tell you about the great and only Orrin's Circus which has just come to town! You remember my writing you of it on the boat coming down? Well, it has been touring ever since—at Merida, Guadalajara, Jalapa, Matamoras, Durango, everywhere until it has come back for its long annual stay in Mexico City. It arrived in time to open on Thursday evening—Washington's Birthday—and the scene was as gay as possible. The Ambassador and Mrs. Finding had invited Dick, Anita, and myself, besides Mr.

Whitney and Lermontoff, to their box, which was beautifully decorated with flowers and American and Mexican flags. Nearly all the diplomats had taken boxes in honor of the occasion. The boxes run around the middle of the circus—which is a sort of circular hippodrome, not a tent, of course—so that one is not too far away from the ring and not too close to it. The marquesa and Pacho sat in a box nearly opposite ours and she glowered at me more than ever. How hard it is to please some people! She was furious because she thought I wanted to marry Pacho, and now apparently is furious because she knows I don't. He sat glued to her side the whole evening with a sort of hangdog expression on his face that I hated to see. I fancy she has made him pay dearly for his little dash for liberty, and he is devoting himself to her to get back into her good graces and check-book.

The circus was more amusing than I can possibly tell you. It isn't at all like our circuses; no pink lemonade and peanuts; it is rather a social function, as I have explained, and more like a high-class vaudeville. After a whole lot of clever acrobatic stunts and the ladies in pink gauze and milk-white chargers had got through, Ricardo

Bell came on and received a roar of applause. Bell, who is the moving spirit of the whole thing, is one of the drollest creatures imaginable and a tremendous favorite. Mr. Finding says he believes if a vote were taken he would be second in popularity only to Diaz! Bell isn't a clown, properly speaking, at all, but a comedian of very evident talents, and although I understand very little Spanish, just his accent and way of speaking sent me off into fits of laughter. There are sixteen young Bells and every one talented, so the whole circus is just a sort of composite of the Bells, and they play into each other's hands with such a spirit of fun and *bonne camaraderie* that one enjoys it tremendously. They did do some clever, funny things. There was a burlesque of "Lucia" that was too absurdly amusing, and after that they did a "turn" in English in honor of the big American crowd, showing how first, second, and third-class railway passengers were treated respectively; the first class bowed down to and gently put into the coaches, the second class rather bawled at and shoved about, and the third class pushed and beaten and thrown down and actually walked on, until any one but an acrobat would have been reduced to a jelly! Of

course, it was all nonsense, but oh, so amusing and so much cleaner than the things we see in vaudeville in New York! I laughed until the tears came into my eyes, and even Lermontoff lost his *weltschmerz* expression and laughed too, like the rest of us. I do enjoy seeing him laugh, for he has such beautiful white teeth. I asked Mr. Whitney if he did not think they were noticeably nice, but he said coldly that he saw nothing remarkable about them.

Mr. Whitney and I had great fun picking out our acquaintances on board the *Orizaba*. They did look so different in their circus clothes from the way they had done aboard ship. We had quite a time trying to decide whether one ethereal young creature in pink tights and gauze was the girl who had sat at the end of our table and eaten enormous quantities of *chili con carne*, and we were not sure until, as she rode around the ring near us doing *haute école* stunts on her big white horse, she happened to look up and we got a good look at her and saw that she recognized us.

"Look at the girl in blue on the trapeze," whispered Mr. Whitney. "Don't you remember how she was everlastingly knitting some white woollen thing on the boat?"

"And the boy holding the net—he was the one who was always practising handsprings on the forward deck," I returned. It was just like seeing old friends!

We went back to the Embassy for a little supper after the circus and, of course, Lermontoff and Whitney went too. The Findings are very fond of Mr. Whitney. It seems that his grandfather was our Minister to Madrid, I think, and Mr. Finding, when a young man, was one of his secretaries. I tried to make Professor Finding feel badly over having refused to go to the circus, but he only smiled and said he had been writing to an old friend to whom he had owed a letter for years, but that if I liked the circus so much he would go any or every night with me! He does pay one such delightful old-fashioned compliments. I do wish you knew him—I am sure you would be friends.

I must stop this and get into a duck of a white dress that I have just had made; we are going out to the Cricket Club this afternoon with Arthur Chiswold.

As ever,

E. E.

HOTEL DE LA PASEO, *March 2, —.*

Yes, Ambassador Finding's brother is the professor of Astronomy at the University. I didn't remember having written that to you, but I suppose all you learned people know about each other. But, really, one would no more suspect him of being a professor of Astronomy than you—he is so genial and up-to-date and wears extremely nice clothes. He has had a year off and has been in Greece most of the time, and is spending a couple of months here with his brother on his way home. He is quite wonderful, I believe, and is to be sent abroad to lecture on "The Observed and Geocentric Paths of the Moon," or something else of equally burning interest at the Sorbonne.

Do forgive me this long, letterless week. I don't really know what has taken up my time—just a lot of amusing silly things doing every day; horsebacking out to Chapultepec and the circus or driving and little dinners that would bore you to hear about. And then, if by any accident I have a half an hour to spare for a letter, there is always Francis Whitney! Really, he is here most of his time and I should think the business that


brought him to Mexico City must be suffering. But fortunately, or unfortunately—I don't remember which he said—he can't do a thing until he gets some important cables from men in the States, and so he is just waiting.

Yesterday afternoon Mrs. Finding telephoned to know if Anita and I would not go driving with her. Anita was lying down with a bad headache, so she sent word that she could not accept, but that I would go with pleasure. When the carriage drove up I found that the Ambassador and Mr. Whitney were with Mrs. Finding, so we four drove out to Chapultepec and I don't know when I have enjoyed anything more. The Paseo was crowded with carriages and the drive around Chapultepec was one long continuous procession. The horses could hardly go faster than a walk, but fortunately the ambassadorial carriages are allowed all sorts of privileges, so we got out of line and went gayly down the centre and everybody wiggled their fingers at us and smiled and bowed. When we got near the entrance to Chapultepec Madame Diaz's carriage flashed by us, and she leaned out and actually wiggled her fingers at Mrs. Finding! By the way, it has been decided that I am to meet the President and

Madame Diaz next Tuesday, and I didn't think anything could excite me so.

The military band was playing very good music and Mrs. Finding, seeing that I enjoyed it, gave an order to the coachman and we came to a standstill near the band. I don't quite know why it is, but certainly it does give one an extra thrill of pleasure to be able to do things that others can't. Only the diplomats can stop their carriages for the music; it is *défendu* for the rest, who have to go on circling by, catching what bits they can. It must be odd to go past while Chopin's "Funeral March" is being played, and then the next time one gets around to find one's self in the middle of "El Morrongo" or "The Washington Post."

Several other diplomats had stopped to listen to the music, and in the intermission we had quite a gay time chatting and laughing. While we were talking I suddenly caught sight of the "Introducer" riding and in *charro* on the other side of the drive. It was the first time I had seen a gentleman in the Mexican national dress, and he looked so resplendent at that distance that I was seized with a desire to see him nearer, and when he bowed I beckoned ever so little to him. He galloped over immediately and really he was too




gorgeous for words on close inspection, seated on his high Mexican saddle and arrayed in the big round *sombrero* and long, tight trousers with endless silver buttons up the sides and all sorts of things hanging from him that jangled and glittered when he moved.

I did not think any one had seen me beckon to the "Introducer," but when he had bowed himself off, Mrs. Finding laughed and told me it was unheard of in Mexico for a young girl to in any way attract a man's notice in such a public place, and that if I had been a Mexican *señorita* unspeakable things would have happened to me in consequence. Arthur Chiswold and Merighi were horsebacking too, but evidently they have been well trained and only bowed discreetly and trotted past.

When the music was over we drove in the park around the castle, under the splendid hoary cypress trees that were old when Montezuma was a boy, according to the legends, and then back down the Paseo and joined the interminable *défile* in San Francisco Street. I had done this before with Anita and I don't think it is at all amusing. Twice a week all the carriages form in a long procession and drive down at a snail's pace on one side of San Francisco Street, usually as far as

the Plaza, and then back up on the other side, while half the inhabitants of Mexico City line up on the sidewalks and stare one out of countenance. As it is so late in the afternoon, clerks from the shops and every sort of artisan and laborer are to be seen in the crowd, but although it is so mixed there is no open rudeness, only an intensity of gaze which is rather trying. The Jockey Club is the worst. All the men one knows who are not driving are sitting at the big entrance in chairs placed on a red velvet carpet and gaze at you as you pass by. To be stared at by so many eyes not three feet away and appear oblivious of the fact is something of a stunt. Anita does it beautifully and so does Mrs. Finding. They look ahead of them with a far-away expression in their eyes, and their manner is not only entirely unembarrassed—it is far more subtle than that—it conveys the impression rather that there is nothing to be embarrassed about, that there is no one there; they simply ignore the whole thing, dismiss it from their universe. Really, if they were royalty and had been used to being gazed at in that impersonal way all their lives they couldn't do it better. I thought it was a beautiful example of the adaptability of the American woman.



I felt terribly young and couldn't keep that vacant look in my eyes for more than two minutes at a time, and once when the whole line stopped—we go so slowly that the least thing brings us to a dead halt—I recognized a nice young Mexican whom I had met, standing right on the curb not two feet away from us. I was so pleased to see some one in all that crowd that I knew, and I was just going to speak to him when Mrs. Findling pinched my arm and told me not to, as it was bad form for ladies in a carriage to talk to any one on the sidewalk. Really, it is quite impossible to know what to do and what not to do here. One feels as though one were a boat in a mined harbor—likely to explode something at any minute.

I think I never wrote you about our afternoon at the Cricket Club. Isn't it amazing the way the English have of making themselves at home anywhere on the face of the globe? Well, this little Cricket Club is simply the most English thing you ever saw. One would think one's self at Market Harborough or Henley-on-Tiddledewinks, or Wapping 'Oldford.

Nearly all the young Englishmen in Mexico City belong to it, of course, and I think they

must have all been there last Saturday. Unfortunately for me, there were very few ladies, and so when the men diffidently asked for some one to make tea for them, and all the English girls unaccountably declined in haste, I said I would with pleasure. It seemed a simple enough return for their hospitality to make a cup of tea for them. But it wasn't a cup of tea they wanted, but gallons and gallons of it. Once the tea making had begun, an unending procession of thirsty, hot young cricketers precipitated themselves upon me and demanded countless cups of tea. And when all the water was gone, they generously offered to bring me kettles of it, boiling hot, and I made tea until my arms ached. If they had been red Indians at a tea-dance they couldn't have been more ravenous for it. The few American men I have seen drink afternoon tea do it in a hollow, perfunctory sort of way that deceives no one as to their real feelings toward it, and I have always thought it an unmistakable sign that a man is deeply in love with a girl if he really enjoys taking five o'clock tea with her. But it seems to be an elemental passion, a deep-seated need of nature with the Englishman. I am convinced after my experience of last Saturday that

a tired and thirsty young English cricketer, if deprived of his afternoon tea, would instantly turn into a wild beast. Anita finally came to my rescue and I made my escape to the piazza, and the first person I saw there was the Honorable Trevor St. John who had just arrived. And do you know, O Wise One, that I had scarcely a tremor this time, and we even laughed and chatted of Lord Bobby and hardly one internal qualm did I feel!

On which note of triumph, I close.

E. E.


HOTEL DE LA PASEO, *March 7*, —.

It is a glorious morning! I am lying propped up in bed writing this to you. Lupe has been in and, after our usual little comedy, has thrown open the long windows, and the sunlight and fine, dry air are pouring into the room.

By "our usual little comedy" I mean the dialogue that almost invariably takes place in the morning. Lupe arrives and as I am always sleepy I say, without opening my eyes, and to gain time: "*Que hora es*, Lupe?" Whereupon she shrugs her shoulders, assumes an *ahuri* expression, as if I had asked her the most astonishing, the

most incredible of questions, and murmurs in a gone sort of tone, "*Quien sabe, Señorita?*" and then as if a brilliant idea has just struck her, she suggests triumphantly "*voi à ver,*" dashes toward the little travelling clock in my sitting-room, and returns breathlessly announcing what o'clock it is. Of course, I am always astonished that it is so late, and by this time, being approximately awake, I can bear to have her fling open the windows, deposit the can of hot water, and leave me to my ablutions.

I had to stop writing there and get up and dress. The morning is really too splendid to spend even a part of it in bed. When I had finished dressing I went out on my little balcony and just then, as if to remind me that in the midst of life we are in death, a funeral street-car went by. Do you know that here the coffins are borne to the cemeteries in street-cars? Some of them are quite splendid with four or six horses and waving plumes and trappings of black. This one was a little, bare car, with the white coffin of some poor baby in it, and drawn by only one small white mule that trotted gayly enough down the street. There were hardly any flowers even, and only a few mourners followed the little body.




Oh, how can any one be dead on this divine morning? in this air that is like cups of wine? I should think that if graveyards ever yawned it would not be at midnight but on just such a glorious day as this. If the dead ever want to struggle back it would surely be to revel in this blue sky, this quivering, vivifying heat.

But I don't want to write you of graveyards, but of my presentation to the President and Madame Diaz last night. The Ambassador had made an appointment for us at half after seven, so, as Diaz is punctual to a fault, we started from here at a quarter after seven for the Calle de Cadena—the street of the Chain—where is the presidential winter residence. In the summer, of course you know, the President goes to Chapultepec. I wore a love of a white dress Le Bouvier made me—thin lace *motifs* set in heavy embroidery, and a white straw with a big plume across it, and some little yellow roses tucked under the brim, and my pearls, of course. I hardly let them get out of my sight! Anita said I looked as nice as possible, and President Diaz said—but I'm not going to tell you what President Diaz said.

Well, we got there just on time. The embassy interpreter—a literal young man with glassy

blue eyes whom I later learned to hate—met us at the entrance and we were taken upstairs immediately to the big drawing-room. The ante-room through which we passed was a beautiful apartment—all Japanese carving and a blue-domed ceiling set with electric lights. The President met us there and we were presented with much thumping of heart on my part, and then went into the drawing-room where Madame Diaz was waiting for us. She looked quite royally handsome, as she stood under the great chandelier, tall and dark with a beautiful face full of character. Of course, she is years and years younger than her wonderful husband—she is his second wife—but she looks his mate in everything but age. How strange it must be to be the near companion of a man who has headed rebellions and led armies and quelled revolts, and who has “put away” innumerable offenders—for he has the *mano ferro*—and rewarded the upright; who, in a word, has made a country! There must be dark nooks and corners of his life that even she knows nothing of.

Madame Diaz’s English is excellent, but I soon discovered she liked best to speak in French, and as Mrs. Finding contrived to have me sit




beside her we had a nice little talk in that tongue. The President will speak Spanish only, not, I hear, because he cannot speak French and English, but because he is afraid of being misunderstood or misquoted in any tongue but his own. And when I had finished my conversation with Madame Diaz and found myself before the President, oh, how I did wish I could speak Spanish! I made some awfully *bête* phrases in English about my immense pleasure at meeting the greatest man in America which the interpreter translated in a cruelly detached, *au-pied-de-la-lettre* sort of fashion that was maddening. I knew just enough Spanish to understand that he delivered my remarks to the President just exactly as I had made them, and, oh, how crude they did sound! It would have been so easy for him to embellish them a little, to deck them with flowers of speech, and make them worthy of being presented to so great a personage. But no!—he just stood there like a human phonograph, giving out in a mechanical voice exactly what he had taken in only in another language, and not helping me one little bit. I think the President saw my despair for he looked at the interpreter and then at me, and then suddenly we both

laughed, and he held out his hand and said the nice thing to me I wouldn't write you—which the glassy-eyed interpreter translated literally with no more show of emotion than if it had been a remark about the weather—and we both bowed, and I moved on to give room to some one else. I forgot to say that the Austrian minister had come in just after us with some people to be presented too, and as there was getting to be quite a party we thought we had better be going.

When I said *adieu* to Madame Diaz she smiled affably and told me to tell Anita—with whom she is great friends—to bring me out to Chapultepec later, and then with much bowing we got ourselves to the door. There, to my surprise, the President, instead of remaining in the drawing-room, gave his arm to Mrs. Finding, and we followed them down the handsome broad stairway to the entrance, where we got into the carriage, the President waiting until the last minute, and bowing us off most graciously.

If I was enthusiastic before you can imagine what I am now that I have actually met and talked with this really great man. Dick and Anita say I will make a most patriotic Mexi-



can, and pretend to be sorry that Pacho won't have me!

Yesterday morning at this time I was walking in the Alameda with Francis Whitney, and, oh, what heavenly coolness and shade one finds there!—what lovely spots set with splashing fountains and gleaming marble benches overtopped with luxuriant plants and prodigally blooming flowers! I could become lyrical over it. But I will spare you. Perhaps, I shall unburden myself of my poetical thoughts to Mr. Whitney—we have an engagement to walk again in the Alameda to-morrow at eleven when the band plays.

E. E.


HOTEL DE LA PASEO, *March 10*, —.

Oh, the ingratitude of man! Father says my letters are getting impossible, and that the last one sounded as though I were writing with the house on fire and I was hurrying to get through before the roof fell in!

It isn't quite as bad as that, but really we do seem to be always rushing around. For the first few days of Lent things were quieter, but now parties for all sorts of things are made up every

day and Anita is getting in her fine work in the sight-seeing line, and there are days when I haven't time to take the normal number of respirations to the minute.

Yesterday was that kind of a day. We went out to the Viga Canal, and it was an experience that I don't care to repeat in a hurry. Merighi, one of the young attachés of the Italian Legation, got up the party in honor of a cousin, the Marchese di Vicenza, who has just arrived to visit him. Instead of letting some one who knew all about it run the expedition, he attempted to do it himself, and the results were, as poor de Cinqueville mournfully expressed it, "*funestes*." He had chartered a street-car. People "charter" street-cars here on the slightest provocation, and we started from the "Bronze Horse" at some unearthly hour, thereby causing poor Pacho, who is constitutionally unable to get up early, to miss the whole thing. But there were a plenty left—the Count and Countess Forli, who were chaperoning, Lermontoff, Dick, Anita, Professor Finding, Mr. Whitney, Mrs. Finding (the Ambassador was too busy to come), Fräulein von Kleinberg, de Cinqueville, the Honorable Trevor, Prince Sumarakoff of the Russian Legation, and Miss



Dalmy, a beautiful American girl he is in love with, Merighi and his cousin the marchese, of course, and myself.


Everybody looked so queer early in the morning! Lermontoff had that look of not having gone to bed at all, and the Countess Forli, who is very handsome in the evening, had awful circles under her eyes, and didn't say a word for hours! Fräulein von Kleinberg was at her best, though sleepy, and looked as fresh and immaculate as a daisy that's just popped open. It took time to collect such a big party and we stood near the Bronze Horse a long while chatting before all had arrived. The peons and street vendors stopped in astonishment and stared at us, amazed to see "fashionables" out so early, I suppose.

Finally, everybody was there except Pacho. It was so late Merighi decided not to wait any longer for him, and we all climbed in the decorated electric street-car and started off. It really was gay—something like a progressive dinner-party. All the ladies strung themselves along in a row, one in each seat, and the men kept changing about, having little talks first with one and then another.

We rode for about two hours and then, when we had reached some unpronounceable place, we got out and our troubles began. A *diligence* should have met us there to take us in to Xochimilco where we were to embark on the canal, but in some way Merighi had failed to arrange just right and instead of the *diligence* a bunch of the sorriest looking native ponies for the men and a forlorn *pulque* wagon, springless and with iron-bound wheels drawn by only two mules, was what awaited us.

You never heard such shouts of laughter as went up when the men got on their melancholy Rosinantes! The poor marchese, who is fabulously tall, was the funniest—his long legs fairly scraped the ground. The poor animals looked *ahuris*, and backed, and filled, and tacked in such a wild way that the men, almost doubled up from laughter, could hardly stay on.

Our mirth was turned to sorrow though when we climbed in the *pulque* wagon. It was so big and heavy that the mules must have exhausted all their strength dragging it through the deep sand to meet us, and when we six women got in the poor things were quite unable to budge it. You never saw such a scene in your life! Every



time the mules would try to start they would almost fall down in their frantic efforts, and finally one mule got so thoroughly exasperated that he refused to do a thing but just stand up on his hind legs and fall over the pole. At last the drivers sent somewhere for two more mules, and when they arrived there *was* a scene! The two new ones were young and flighty, and hadn't the ghost of an idea of working. They simply frisked around and did park steps of their own design, and there was such shouting and whistling and yelling on the part of the frenzied drivers as you never heard.

Between the shouting and pounding of the mules, and the war dance the two new ones in front were executing, my heart failed me, and I wearily climbed out of the wagon and announced that I intended to walk. Of course, all the men fell off their horses and I tried one, but I had on a short white duck skirt so I could not put my leg over the high Mexican pommel, and the saddle was too small to sit sidewise in, so I gave it up and started out through the *pulque* plants with Anita who had got out of the wagon too. We walked half an hour and then were ready to cry with pain, for our feet were nearly blistered

by the burning hot sand, and Dick made us get back into the wagon again.

After an eternity of joltings and stoppings and startings we got to Xochimilco and the canal. There we had luncheon and a dance—we weren't too exhausted to dance!—and then we got into a prettily decorated launch and went for a ride on the canal.

It is quite wonderful, you know—not at all like canals as we know them—but a labyrinthine network of flowery water-ways, the banks everywhere hung and covered with millions of sweet peas and roses and gardenias and lilies. Sometimes ever so far away, across an intervening mass of flowers, one could see what was apparently just a head gliding along, while near to us Indian girls in canoes darted in and out among the flowers which they pick and send down the canal in the gray dawn to the Kiosk de Flores.

Every one was enchanted with La Viga, especially the poor marchese in whose honor the party had been got up, and who was so enthusiastic that he wanted to see and try everything. When we got back to Xochimilco and were waiting for the dreadful wagon to be made ready to



take us back, he even insisted on trying *pulque*. I don't see how any one ever found out what *pulque* was like, because it would seem impossible to ever get it 'near enough one's nose to drink it.

Of course the men ought not to have let the poor innocent marchese try it anyway, for it is dreadfully strong. Naturally it completely bowled him over, and as he couldn't stay on his horse, Merighi reluctantly put him in our wagon, where he plumped himself down by me with many expressions of admiration! The poor boy was so overcome by the wretched *pulque* that I thought every minute his head would be on my shoulder. He only insisted on holding my hand, however, saying that I reminded him of his sister. Now wasn't that an idiotic situation? But I let him go on holding my hand, for he is only a boy and I felt unspeakably sorry for him, and for Merighi who was in agonies of embarrassment, and I was not a little indignant with the other men for having allowed him to get into such a scrape. So there we sat and I thought to myself that if any one had ever told me that I would sit quietly in a *pulque* wagon drawn by kicking mules with my bones rattling against

the iron sides of that cart, and with an intoxicated boy holding my hand, I would never have believed it.

Suddenly he decided that he had had enough of the wagon (I didn't blame him for that), and that he wanted to get out and walk, and walk with me! He wouldn't let any of the men come near him and so we started off, Anita, who had insisted on coming too, on the other side of him. Anita and I are both tall, but he towered inches above us and we must have made an awfully funny picture as we guided him along. But it was even more dangerous than amusing, for we were walking among the *pulque* plants, and if he had stumbled and fallen he might easily have killed himself or put an eye out or something disagreeable like that, not to mention crushing us. After what seemed an eternity to us he allowed Mr. Whitney, who had followed us, scowling and indignant, to take him, and Anita and I got in the wagon again. Poor Merighi thanked us over and over, and for my part I feel that if ever I merited thanks it was on that occasion. Fortunately the effect of the *pulque* wore off quickly, and by the time we got back to the city the marchese was his usual debonair self.

Where do you think we are going on Monday? You could never guess, so I might as well tell you—to the Isthmus of Tehuantepec! Now doesn't that seem like the jumping off place? It's so narrow that if you jump one way you will plump yourself into the Atlantic, and if you jump the other, into the Pacific. One has only to make a choice. Now don't blame me! It was all arranged between Mr. Whitney, who says he has to go back to his plantation, and Anita, who has suddenly developed a mad curiosity about coffee haciendas. I think it a rather unwise step, but I suppose it would sound conceited to suggest such a thing to people who don't seem to have any glimmerings about the situation. I can't make out whether Anita is very obtuse or very pleased.

Anyway it's all settled. We start Monday morning—Mr. and Mrs. Finding, Professor Finding, Dick, Anita, Mr. Whitney and myself. You see it is just a nice little Anglo-Saxon party, and I shall not be sorry to say good-by for a few weeks to all the foreign titles we've been seeing so much of, especially the Persian who was becoming oppressive. We get back the first of April and go down to Cuernavaca for Holy Week with the rest of the Mexican world, flesh and devil.

I know now how Christopher Columbus felt when he set forth in the *Santa Maria* for unknown shores!

Your "Explorigator,"

E. E.

HOTEL SPLENDIDE,
ORIZABA, *March 12, —,*

This place is admirable and would just suit you, O Star-Gazer! One seems nearer the heavens here than in Mexico City, although it is three thousand feet lower down. Perhaps it is because it is so quiet and blissfully isolated. This little city nestles in the side of the mountains and Orizaba, Mountain of the Star, rises in majesty above it. I have been out on my little balcony all morning gazing at her. One could easily imagine one's self in Switzerland—certainly there is nothing more beautiful there than snow-covered Orizaba. The air here is perfectly delicious—softer than in Mexico City, and although it is the middle of March, quite cool. Last night—we got here at three in the afternoon—we all strolled about for hours through the plazas and the Alameda that has a rather pathetic, desolate beauty, and gazed at Orizaba shining white in the bright moonlight and lis-

tened to the music of *jaranas* in the garden across from the hotel.

This hotel, in spite of its grandiloquent name, is very good. We were amazed and delighted to find electric lights in our rooms. They were very small, however, and so after turning on the one at the dressing-table as the big room was still far from bright, I went over and turned on the one hanging conveniently above the bed. What was my astonishment to see the one at the dressing-table go out! By some miracle of economy they had arranged it so that as one was lighted the other was extinguished! I decided then and there that it would be impossible to get ahead of a Mexican hotel proprietor. Dick says this is just a mild sample of what the canny Mexican can do, and that the only country in the world where the Jew can't thrive is Mexico where they beat him at his own game!

The trip down—which I have been longing to take ever since I went up—has been wonderful. Nothing that the most rapturous writers in the guide-books tell you is too marvellous to believe. Especially after we left Esperanza and commenced an abrupt descent was the scenery magnificent beyond words. We had almost half an

hour there and we strolled around the station and bought gardenias that are sold in sections of bamboo. A little trap door is made in it and one opens it to find a mass of gardenias gleaming cool and white among their green leaves inside. Then one shuts the little door and holds on by the handle and so they can be kept fresh for hours.

When we left Esperanza we stood on the back platform to get a good view of the scenery on what is said to be the most picturesque railway line in the world. It was stupendous. We simply rolled down the mountain. Esperanza is right on the edge of the plain and the train literally rolls off, the engineer having only to open the throttle. The only use for steam thereafter is for the brakes. At a little place called Alta Luz there were women on the station platform selling fruit, and an hour after the same women offered us the same fruit (!) at Maltrata, at the foot of the mountain. They had simply gone straight down the side of it while we wound around and around over *barrancas*, through tunnels, along precipices for nine miles to get to the level. I think I rather sound like a sublimated guide-book, so I will get back to real life!

The farewell to Mexico, yesterday, was really touching. Although we left at seven in the morning, several of "the faithful," as Dick calls them, lined up on the platform with offerings—books and boxes of sweets and huge bunches of flowers, and at the last moment Lermontoff arrived with a servant carrying an enormous basket of mangoes decorated prettily with flowers and ribbons and here and there silver mango forks sticking up.

It was just the sumptuous sort of present that one would expect from Lermontoff, and it certainly was thoughtful of him to have had the forks put in, for it is really impossible to eat a mango without one. Did you ever see one? They are quite queer looking, with one long tine in the middle that one jabs clear through the fruit and a smaller one on each side that sticks in the pulpy part. In that way the mango is held quite firmly, and then when one is sure it is on the fork good and tight one can commence operations! First, one peels it and then one begins and just *gnaws* all around on any convenient old place, and in spite of the greatest precautions the juice runs down all over one's face and one gets quite messy! Even Anita, who is so dainty and pretty, looked

like a greedy child while she was eating. One ought to have a towel for a napkin and a finger-bowl as big as a wash basin for mangoes!

CORDOBA—*next day.*

I thought I would scribble to you a little more about our travels, so I did not send off my letter but saved it for a word about Cordoba.

We left Orizaba this afternoon and came down here in about an hour and found it just what the guide-books said it is—"a city of the tropics, novel and picturesque to a degree." We are here in a funny little hotel and will go on to Vera Cruz to-morrow. There is a *fiesta* going on for the benefit of the earthquake sufferers in Colima, and this evening after dinner Anita, Dick, Mr. Whitney, and I strolled over to the big plaza to see what it was like. There we found a crowd of people seated at little tables playing "Loteria," which is a queer sort of game. We sat down at one of the little tables with a handsome Mexican señora and her daughter for whom, to my surprise, Dick and Frank Whitney bought the little cards used in the game. They were received with the greatest dignity and calmness, and Anita whispered to me not to look so *ahurie*—that it

was the custom here for the gentlemen to do such things! I suppose it is just like paying the street-car fare; when a lady enters a street-car in Mexico City if there is a gentleman on it who is an acquaintance, no matter how slight, he always pays her fare. I have seen it done when the gentleman was at one end of the car and the lady at the other and not a word passed between them. I only wish we could pay our big bills like that! It is very late, so *buenas noches*.

E. E.

COATZACOALCOS, *March 16, —*.


No—it isn't a sedlitz powder, it is just the name of this little isthmian town; and the only way to pronounce it without choking is to shut your eyes, grasp something firmly, and then say the whole thing without taking a breath. Doesn't it sound fizzy? I think if one could manage to sneeze while one is saying it, it would help matters.

It is really a dear little town, as alert looking as possible, perched on a hill, with an eye out for steamers passing up and down the coast. The big Coatzacoalcos River flows by it, out into the gulf, and ocean-going steamers can cross the bar and sail far up it.

I assure you nothing ever looked more attractive to me than that isthmian port after our night on the boat coming down from Vera Cruz. Some way I don't like Vera Cruz—I cross my fingers now every time it's mentioned. We got there from Cordoba the day after I wrote you, and went to a hotel that was more hopeless than the one at Merida. Of course, I didn't have to go to the Waites this time, but they called immediately and the Port Works must have stopped again!

That afternoon late we got a coastwise steamer—it was a Spanish liner, whose name I will never reveal—and started on our one hundred and fifty mile trip down the coast.

There were a good many Mexicans on board, men, women, and babies, and their manners were somewhat appalling—they were absolutely *sans gêne*. It was quite frightful at times. But fortunately there was a good deal of deck room, and we drew away from the others to a secluded part of the deck where we sat for hours watching Orizaba. The afternoon sun made her white crest quite rosy, and we mourned as the shadows fell and she melted from our sight in the gathering darkness. When the new moon came up we saw




her again though and the picture was so exquisite that the tears came into my eyes.

We needed our tears for other things though—the boat was unspeakable! Mr. Whitney, who has been up and down the coast so often, warned us that we had experiences before us, and by liberally bribing the two stewards, got our dinner—what was eatable of it—served up on deck. He insisted that we would not be able to eat a morsel if we went down to the stuffy little salon, and from what I saw of other parts of the boat I quite believed him. We sat there on the deck for a long while, laughing, telling jokes, and singing. Mr. Whitney has a really beautiful barytone; he sang on his College Glee Club, and the Ambassador's deep voice was good to hear. But we were all a little tired and so at half after ten, with many misgivings inspired by Mr. Whitney, we went to our state-room. It was the most extraordinary place—just one rather big room with bunks all around it—six or eight, I don't remember which, and we three, Anita, Gordon—that's Mrs. Finding's name and I think it fascinating—and I were expected to sleep there, while the men were all stuffed off into a similar omnibus compartment. We found Gordon's maid

and Blanca, Anita's maid, whom we had taken to do for us both, as it was so much trouble to take Lupe along too, in an awful state of mind. They hadn't put out any of our night things and I wondered why. The minute Blanca saw Anita she began an awful jabbering to her in Spanish, and she was so excited and talked so fast that I couldn't make out a thing, except the one awful word "cackeroaches!" Anita got as excited as Blanca was, and finally when I couldn't stand it any longer and besought her to tell me what the matter was, explained that countless "cackeroaches" were simply wandering all about the room and that the maids were afraid for us to get into the beds! Also that the water in the tiny pitchers had the appearance of having been in them for days and days and that the towels were the size of pocket handkerchiefs.

We simply groaned! We knew how impossible it would be to try to do anything about it. The difficulty we had had getting our dinner on deck had given us an idea of how stubborn "the noble Spaniard" could be. Besides, it wasn't so much the towels and water we were excited about as the "cackeroaches," and it was obviously impossible to exterminate them at that hour of the night.



Finally, after an appalling amount of the Spanish and English languages had been expended, we determined to make the best of things, to defy the "cackeroaches" and go bravely to bed and get what rest we could. So we bathed our faces with handkerchiefs soaked in eau-de-cologne from our dressing bags and gingerly got into the berths, leaving the dim oil lights burning.

But I couldn't get to sleep for ages. Personally, I would prefer meeting a Bengal tiger to a "cackeroach," and I was so nervous that every time the covers touched my cheek or arm it was all I could do to keep from shrieking. At last I had just managed to doze off into a troubled sleep when I was awakened by an awful scream, and popping my head up, I saw Anita standing in the middle of the room white as a sheet. While I was still gazing at her my eye was caught by a moving black spot on my own counterpane and I looked down to see a large "cackeroach" sailing gayly across it. With a shriek that was the mate of Anita's I was up and out on the floor beside her. Then Gordon woke up and screamed and the maids screeched together—and everybody just began pitching themselves into their clothes, each one for herself. There was no ceremony at

all. Every few seconds the air was rent by a shriek or moan as "cackeroaches" emerged from their hiding places and galloped merrily about.

It took us about two minutes to get dressed and then we just raced up the steps to the deck, the maids following behind. There was a beautiful moon and we huddled together and decided that we would far rather spend the night *à la belle étoile* than go back to the "cackeroaches."

Suddenly a large figure enveloped in a steamer rug appeared at the top of the stairs and looked out. We all began to scream in surprise—we had got the habit of screaming—and Gordon just flew over and fell limply into her husband's arms and I heard him murmur wearily over her head—"cackeroaches!"

It really was nice to have him, as it would have been rather uncanny to have stayed on deck all night by ourselves. But I need not have worried on the score of company, for we had hardly got settled in our steamer chairs when up came Professor Finding, looking as disturbed as his serene face can look, and not five minutes afterward Dick and Frank Whitney arrived as cross as two bears! Mr. Whitney was for going back hurriedly when he caught a glimpse of us, as he


was in his shirt sleeves, but Anita and Gordon called to him to come right on and not to mind about anything as the occasion was not one of ceremony. So he came over and after apologizing for his looks sat down by me, and really you can't think how well he looked in shirt sleeves! If a man is well-set up, shirt sleeves are his most becoming costume and Frank's shoulders are superb.

I should have felt romantic sitting out there all night in the warm air that had just a touch of divine coolness in it, with a handsome young man beside me and watching the mysterious looking water and the brilliant southern stars and the moon that had a beautiful heliotrope ring around it. But I don't believe I could feel romantic again, not if I were looking at a moon that had as many rings as Saturn; that sort of thing is dead and gone as far as I am concerned and I am glad of it. I've been torn up root and branch once by my strong emotions and I don't ever want to be again; I want to sink my roots deep once more and attain a steady, respectable growth unharmed by storms, unscorched by heat or drought. Is that too much to ask of destiny, oh, Wise One? How I envy you—you who have lived a profit-

able, passionless life, full of honor and good works!

When the sun began to come up it was even more lovely than the night had been. Such exquisite long shafts of amethyst and gold and shell pink and at last the sun rising in glory from the waves! No one felt the least tired, refreshed rather, and we hated so to go down to that awful state-room even for a moment, that we sent the maids—after some cajoling—for our dressing bags and we put on some more eau-de-cologne and fixed our hair up right there on deck! The men being Americans and, therefore, only a little lower than the angels, got out of our way in that respectful, nice fashion they have, so we just took our hair down and brushed and combed to our hearts' content, and when the boat steamed up to the wharf at Coatzacoalcas and the quarantine officer came out in his tender flying an unhealthy looking yellow flag and climbed over the boat's side, we were quite ready for inspection.

The quarantine business is an awful nuisance, especially when the officer leaves us sitting in a row with certified thermometers sticking in our mouths and goes off with the captain for unlimited brandy-and-sodas and forgets all about us! The



maids were still so excited after their night's adventures that we were afraid their temperatures would be something frightfully abnormal, but luckily the officer was so conscience-smitten when he came back and found us still sitting there speechless and unhappy that he jerked the thermometers out of our mouths without looking at them much and hustled us off the boat.

We came up here to spend the morning with some friends of Mr. Whitney, and this is really a delightful place—a frame bungalow perched on a cliff with a magnificent view out over the river and Gulf and deliciously cool airs sweeping across this little *corridor* where I am writing. A dozen gaudy parrots are swinging and screaming on the front piazza, and the most magnificent, brilliant tree called appropriately the *flamboyant* is flaunting its great scarlet flowers in my face when I look up.

It is the tropics and no mistake!

We start this afternoon for the hacienda and oh, I think I am going to enjoy this wild journey to the end of the world!

Yours excitedly,

E. E.

HACIENDA EL PARAISO,
ISTHMUS OF TEHUANTEPEC, *March 18, —.*

DEAR LADY:

This place is rightly named—it is Paradise or next door to it and I am blissfully happy here and could stay a hundred years! I am sure that this letter will be a mass of stars and exclamation points and staccato sentences, so be prepared for the worst! We got here only last night and I feel as though I were still in a lovely dream of some sort.

Santa Lucrecia was hardly a dream though—Santa Lucrecia is the place we went to from Coatzacoalcos, to get back to the Coatzacoalcos! It sounds like a riddle, doesn't it? Well, reduced to simple terms it means that, as the Coatzacoalcos River loops the loop and bends and twists and ties itself up into double bow-knots, instead of following its erratic wanderings, one takes the train and cuts straight across the country to the little station of Santa Lucrecia where we were to get Mr. Whitney's naphtha launch to bring us on down the river twenty-five miles to this hacienda.

When we reached Santa Lucrecia, to Frank's great annoyance the naphtha launch had not arrived, so, instead of being able to begin our

journey down the river, we prepared to spend the night in the hope that it would be there in the morning. I say "spend the night" instead of "sleeping," because I did not get any sleep to speak of.


Santa Lucrecia is really nothing but the depot for the three or four big haciendas on this part of the isthmus, and there was nothing there but a few native huts and a station-house where the managers and guests of those plantations can put up in emergencies. Only an emergency would ever induce *me* to put up there again, I can assure you. The heat was indescribable and the bedrooms were all those friendly, omnibus affairs, with the partitions running only two-thirds to the ceiling and all open above so that one's lightest whisper was heard from one end of the place to the other. Horrible misgivings as to whether I snored or not assailed me for the first time in my life.

But when I got into bed and dragged the *pavellon* about me—the *pavellon* is a mosquito bar of thick, white muslin with no nice, airy holes in it as our nets in the South have—I wondered if I would have breath enough to snore. I thought it more likely I would be asphyxiated immediately,

but in a few moments I found, to my surprise, that I was not going to be smothered at all and that one felt rather comfy and safe from "cackeroaches" and snakes and insects of any sort with the *pavellon* tucked snugly around one.

I was just thinking of going to sleep when all sorts of awful noises began. Dogs barked and every *peon* in the place lounged up to the house and bought drinks at the bar and then began to talk and quarrel and get most intensely drunk. Poor creatures! One can hardly blame them. "Agua-diente" is their only refuge—their lives are barren of pleasures and diversions and so they take to drink. I can philosophize about it now, but last night I was only cross clear through.

About one o'clock there suddenly arose a noise beside which all the rest had been only murmurs. Something terrifying had evidently happened and we all got up, dressed hastily, and rushed out to see what it was. Frank and the station master went off in the dark with lanterns to investigate, and came back in half an hour with the news that a drunken Indian had walked off the high bank into the river and drowned. His widow and dozens of drunken sympathizers came back with Frank and you never heard such wails and shrieks



in your life. The woman seemed crazy with grief and I felt really dreadfully sorry for the poor creature. She ran up and down the station platform crying and talking out loud, and we besought Dick to try and comfort her; but after listening a few moments, to my horror he and Frank burst out laughing and told us that we need not worry; that she was calling her husband every sort of dreadful name and was only grieving because now that he was dead she would have no one to pay her way to Minatitlan and buy her trinkets at the great Indian Feast of the Candelaria next week!

About three in the morning a gallant Indian finally came to her rescue, offered to take her to the Fiesta, her wails abruptly ceased, and we dozed off gratefully for an hour or two.

We waited until noon and then as no naphtha launch had appeared, Mr. Whitney reluctantly decided that something had happened to it and that, as we couldn't wait indefinitely at Santa Lucrecia, we had better begin the trip in dug-out canoes. Two were obtained—huge ones—and into one we all got and into the other the maids and the luggage. Our big trunks did look strange in that primitive boat!

The journey was indescribable! The river is wide even as high up as Santa Lucrecia and it became more and more imposing with each mile, the verdure on each side more diverse and tropical looking. I just lay back against the cushions—one sits in the bottom of the boat, of course—and imagined myself in a fairy story. Two boatmen in each canoe walked ceaselessly up and down the narrow runways on each side of the canoes, poling rhythmically. It really was enchanting and one would have enjoyed unalloyed happiness if only one's feet had not gone to sleep. We had to tie up every now and then and get out on the bank and walk up and down to wake them up!

We passed numberless alligators, of course, sunning themselves on the branches and roots of trees sticking up in the water near the shore. None of the men had revolvers with them unfortunately and the astute creatures seemed to know it for only a few suspicious characters dropped off into the water at our approach; most of them just blinked an eye at us as we passed and went on with their forty winks.

Late in the afternoon we came to a beautiful hacienda and tied up for the night. Just before we got there, as we were rounding the last *vuelta*,


one of the boatmen blew a long blast on a conch shell, and when they heard it the people came down to the bank and simply welcomed us with open arms. When I tell you that the people were English you may know what an expanding effect the climate has on the character! Really, it is only in some out-of-the-way place such as this lovely, flowery isthmus, that one learns the true meaning of hospitality.

The next morning we saw the naphtha launch going up the river and stopped it. It seems that something had gone wrong with the engine when only five miles from El Paraiso, and Florentino the *maquinista* had been the whole day getting it to working again. So as we knew we could get to the plantation in the launch in only a few hours, we accepted the Wokings' pressing invitation to spend the day and did not start for Mr. Whitney's hacienda until late in the afternoon.

It was heavenly going down the river, and when the moon got up and the stars all came out it was idyllic. About nine o'clock Florentino suddenly began blowing on his conch shell and in a minute we had turned a *vuelta* and were at the landing steps.

It was like some quick transition at a theatre—getting from the launch and the wild, tropical

river into this house which is so comfortable and strangely beautiful that I am in ecstasies. Last night I was only conscious that there was a big, wide hall filled with masses of deliciously fragrant flowers and that my bedroom was as pretty as possible, with dainty curled maple furniture and easy chairs and tables with flowers and books and papers only a month old! But this morning I have seen how really well-planned and built the whole place is. Mr. Whitney must have spent an enormous amount of money on his hacienda and house—a big square frame building with a wide *corridor*, as they call piazzas down here, running all around it, enclosed in copper screens and birds flitting about in it gayly. There are all sorts of easy-chairs covered with the skins of the isthmian tiger, and tables and books and magazines and a big Victor with all the latest records. It's almost impossible to keep a piano in tune in this damp atmosphere, they tell me. The bedrooms are delicious; one wonders how on earth they got all these things down from New York, but I have already ceased to wonder and only enjoy. I now understand why Mr. and Mrs. Loughridge—who welcomed us warmly—did not bother to go up to Mexico City. One



doesn't voluntarily leave paradise—Adam and Eve got turned out, you know.

I am writing in this lovely *corridor* now and every one is teasing me to stop, so I think I shall, as I have written you a volume. This will go up to-morrow, Mr. Whitney says. As the rains haven't begun yet the one steamer that plies up and down the river isn't running and a canoe will be sent up with our mail. Now doesn't that sound delightful and out of the world?

E. E.

HACIENDA EL PARAISO, *March 23*, —.

DEAR STAR-GAZER:

I can't believe we have been in this heavenly place for almost a week! The time has flown. One of our favorite ways of making it fly is to sit perfectly still on this *corridor*, fanning ourselves, watching the birds, and gazing out over the river that flows majestically by. The view of the other side of the Coatzacoalcos is chromo-lithographic for brilliancy and beauty. Straight, coroneted palms—I'm not sure just what kind they are, there are so many varieties—rise against a dense blue sky, and with the aid of an opera-glass we can see brilliant birds flitting about and innum-

able parrots and *papagayos*. We cannot see the monkeys, but we can hear them barking and they make a tremendous noise. I never realized before just what was meant by "a monkey and parrot time." But if you were here late in the afternoon you would know how the expression originated—such screeching of parrots and barking of monkeys you never heard!

And if you could only see the flowers! There are thirty-two varieties of roses alone in the garden and innumerable gardenias and the most gorgeous oleanders which I always want to eat as to me they smell just like vanilla ice cream tastes!

This evening after dinner—it was still daylight—we all strolled through the gardens and pulled flowers to our hearts' content—great handfuls and baskets of them. The gardener, Julio, is a nice old creature and doesn't object at all. He keeps the kitchen garden as beautifully as the flowers and we have the most delicious vegetables from it.

"I like the sight of this kitchen garden quite as well as the flower garden," Anita said as we walked about.

"You remind me of the man in Hardy's novel, who said his favorite flower was the cauliflower," laughed Professor Finding.

"I wonder why Julio is so thin?" asked Mrs. Loughridge, gazing at him as he worked on a fuchsia bed near the *corridor* steps.

"Who ever saw a fat gardener?" demanded Frank Whitney. "I never did, did you? I don't believe there are any fat ones." And do you know we all racked our memories and not a single one of us could remember ever having seen a fat gardener!

"But why, why?" plaintively queried Mrs. Loughridge

"In the temperate zone one could imagine that the capricious changes in temperature and the likelihood of frosts and droughts might keep them thin with anxiety, but down here they don't have to worry that way at all and I can't see why they don't get fat," murmured Gordon.

Just then there was an awful commotion by the *corridor* steps, and we rushed over in time to see Julio kill a snake at least six feet long with his machete; it looked twelve feet long to me so I think it must have been at least six.

"Perhaps it's snakes that keep Julio thin," I suggested and every one laughed.

"Did you know there's a whole fourteen-course dinner growing out here?" demanded Dick, com-

ing up. "Cocoa, coffee, pepper, alligator pears, lettuce, potatoes, oranges, pineapples, bananas—" he stopped because he was out of breath.

The bananas are quite wonderful. There is a little passageway between the house and the kitchen and it is hung with innumerable bunches of bananas. I used to think that there were only two sorts of bananas—good ones and bad ones, but you ought to see them here! There are long thin bananas and short dumpy ones and red bananas and yellow bananas and a dozen other varieties.

By the way, this place isn't quite so out of the world as I supposed. Would you believe it, we had callers yesterday! We were all sitting on the *corridor* waiting for luncheon to be ready when suddenly we heard an awful racket and much shouting and looking up we saw three people—a man and a woman and a little girl—galloping toward the house through the coffee *finca*. Mr. Whitney, who was sitting near me, jumped up, and when he saw who it was he just groaned.

"It's the Widow," I heard him murmur in a gone sort of voice.

Dick jerked himself out of his steamer chair.

"Widow? whose widow?" he demanded excitedly.

"It's Colfax, the manager of the Hacienda el Rosario and his sister. She's visiting him—she's a widow, a Mrs. Welford."


Mrs. Loughridge looked at me. "Don't be alarmed," she said; "she's rather awful, but you won't have to see much of her, for Rosario is seventeen miles away by the river and ten through the jungle and she *can't* get over here often. And don't," she added impressively, turning to the rest, "for heaven's sake, don't anybody suggest her staying over night!"

They were almost to the steps by that time and Frank went out through the double-screened doors to meet them with a good imitation of a man glad to see his guests. After a good deal of coy laughing the Widow let him lift her off her horse, and Julio, who was working near by, took the ponies away and they all came up into the *corridor*.

The young man was nice enough—quite inoffensive looking, but the child, whom her mother introduced as "Louise, my little eight-year-old," had *enfant terrible* written all over her. She was dressed in a painfully young fashion and out of

the mop of stringy hair hanging around her face a pair of unnaturally old and mischievous eyes looked. As for the Widow—she is years older than her brother, and her very short khaki riding skirt matched neatly her peroxide hair. It reminded me unpleasantly of the stricken Gregorio's. Over her much powdered face was carefully tied one of those new lace veils—you know, the kind that makes one's complexion look like a Maori chief's. She greeted Mrs. Loughridge with an effusion apparently quite wasted and after one comprehensive glance around, sank gracefully into a seat between the only two single men present, Professor Finding and Frank. For one awful instant I thought the Professor meditated flight; he looked thoroughly alarmed, and if you only knew him—how I wish you did!—you would appreciate just how dreadful such a woman would seem to him.

As for myself, I couldn't think of a thing to say to her. I was stricken dumb. Don't you know people like that—people who shut you up like a clam? My body sits there politely before them, but my soul is a thousand miles away. Even people I respect and admire frequently have that dampening effect on me—they take the curl out



of my spirits, and leave them stringy and uninteresting.

Really, she is quite the most appalling type of American I have ever met and corresponds exactly to the antiquated English impression of the American girl. She told us at luncheon of dancing in the Pavilion at Coney Island and how "lovely" the floor was and she plays ragtime exclusively and does not object to having her hands held—so Mrs. Loughridge informed me in a horrified whisper. It seems that gossip about her is known far and wide. She is on a visit to her brother with the avowed intention of marrying some lonely male down here, and for weeks has raged up and down the isthmus seeking whom she may devour matrimonially; but so far these isolated men have shown a caution popularly supposed to exist only in more sophisticated circles. Obviously she is the kind of woman who regards every man she meets in the light of a possible husband—a sort of matrimonial appraiser who believes in having an option on a man.

After tea had been served and the hour approached when she might be expected to be setting out homeward, the Widow suddenly developed a severe headache and had to lie down

on Mrs. Loughridge's bed. I thought surely she would end by staying over night and Frank Whitney looked the picture of gloom, but Anita suddenly came to the rescue and dragged a bottle of headache medicine out of her dressing-bag which she assured Mrs. Welford acted *à merveille*, and before that prostrated lady could protest had fairly poured a dose down her throat.

Louise seemed absolutely indifferent to her mother's sufferings and only sat still on the *corridor* kicking her heels gayly when Mrs. Welford called to her in a faint voice to come. Mrs. Loughridge was scandalized at such disobedience and said sternly: "Aren't you sorry your mama has such a headache?" To our horror she gave us the drollest look out of her wicked little eyes and burst out laughing. "She ain't got a thing the matter with her," she declared, and then as we sat stricken dumb, she added, "and I say, Uncle Bob, I'm eleven, and not eight, ain't I? She tells everybody I'm eight!" and with that she laughed harder than ever.

"Uncle Bob" just grunted something and everybody commenced wildly talking nonsense at the same time to keep the terrible thing quiet, and fortunately at that dreadful moment Anita ap-

peared and assured us that Mrs. Welford was all right again. Poor Colfax, calling to his sister, jumped up in a jiffy and ordered the ponies. Julio brought them around in a surprisingly short time—he had them around the corner of the house waiting, I think—and before the Widow could rally her forces and expostulate, Frank was lifting her gallantly to her saddle and we were all saying good-by with different degrees of *empressement*.

Yours in the fear of widows,

E. E.

EL PARAISO, *March 26*, —.

DEAR PROFESSOR OF STAROLOGY:

This is certainly the land where somebody first remarked, "it never rains but it pours." The rainy season has set in much earlier than usual (I'm beginning to think I'm a rain crow) and such torrents as have descended upon us the last two mornings! It begins about four in the morning and rains with a sort of fury until seven when the sun bursts out, the flowers perk up their drenched heads, the birds begin to sing and everything is lovely again until the next morning at four when it all begins *da capo*. This morning I

lay in bed and listened to the floods descending, and I can just imagine how old Noah felt rainy mornings in the ark. But oh, it was cosey lying there with the long French windows open and knowing that no matter how hard it poured the rain couldn't beat in because of the wide *corridor* running all around the house. Only a delicious spray scented with gardenias and roses drifted in. While I was lying there half asleep enjoying it all, the bell in the bell-tower rang for the *peons* to go to work, and I did feel sorry for the poor things having to go out in that downpour. But my sympathy was probably wasted, for soon I heard them trudging off down the *finca* road, singing as they went. I suppose they are used to it, and as their costume is microscopic it is only like taking a prolonged shower-bath.

With all this rain and hot sun of course mildew is rampant. If one lays a book down, when one picks it up the next day there is a nice coating of mould upon it, and one's boots have to be eternally cleaned to keep them in condition. From all this, you might imagine that down here it is what my old darky nurse used to call a "delirious climate," but it isn't at all. I never felt better, the heat does not seem to be enervating and the

gorgeous beauty of foliage and flowers puts such things as malaria and rheumatism completely out of one's head.

Some way or other almost everything else seems to be put out of my head, too, and I live along from day to day in a sort of enchantment. Oh! it's delicious down here in this flowery land with congenial friends, cut off absolutely from the world (except for the Widow!); I was getting so tired of the *va-et-vient* of life in Mexico City. It was delightful but this is better. I don't know what's come over me, but I haven't felt so happy and contented for a year. The memory of—things—is fading away and if only I could be sure that it would be eternally blotted out!

This morning was heavenly after the rain, and right after breakfast, which Wong, Mr. Whitney's Celestial *cordons bleus*, served to us on the *corridor*, we started out for a horseback ride through the coffee *fincas*. By "we" I mean Mr. Whitney—not the cook!—and myself. Of all the divine experiences of the senses surely none can be more perfect than riding through a flowering coffee *finsa* in the early morning, the earth still drenched with the purifying rain, the shining succulent leaves still dripping gently, the white blossoms

breathing forth a strong, delicious, pervasive fragrance.

The path through the *finca* was so narrow that we had to ride very close, and do you know, dear Wise One, I am not sure, after all, that I am happy; he never said a word, but there were electric currents and electric currents disturb me. Oh! I don't want to be disturbed or electrified. I want to be let alone, to live in quiet, unexciting enjoyment of common things. But I have premonitions! By the way, wouldn't it be humiliating if they were superfluous!

As we were coming back from our ride a poor woman, the wife of one of the *peons*, came out of her thatched hut and began talking to Mr. Whitney. She was sobbing pitifully and held up one of her hands for him to see. It had an awful ulcer on it. The sight made one feel absolutely ill, but Mr. Whitney in the kindest way examined it intently for a moment and then said something rapidly in Spanish to her. I couldn't make out what he had said, but she looked so grateful that I thought she was going to fall on her knees to him. I understood when, a few hours later, I saw her with a bundle of clothes and her husband getting into a canoe to go down the river to see a

physician at Minatitlan. Mr. Loughridge says none of the other hacienda owners around here would have dreamt of going to so much trouble and expense—sending a canoe and two men to row and letting the woman's husband leave his work to go, too. Most of them would have let the *Superintendente* give her a little medicine and she would just have to get well the best way she could. I liked him for his kindness—but then I like him for so many things!


As everybody takes a siesta after luncheon, we are always ready to sit up until the most unearthly hours at night. It is quite perfect out here on this *corridor* in the evenings. There is the big Victor and sometimes we push all the long chairs and tables back and dance to wonderful Strauss waltzes or we sit silent and entranced listening to Michaelowa or Sembrich sing for us or still more often we just talk, talk interminably while heavenly breezes laden with the scent of a thousand flowers blow upon us and we watch the big white moon come up over the palm trees that line the great river flowing past at our feet with a monotonously musical rhythm.

“Who could ever dream that such an out-of-the-way place as the Isthmus of Tehuantepec

could be so perfect a spot?" I sighed last night. Dinner was over, Wong had taken away the coffee cups, and we were sitting on the *corridor* talking. Here and there one could see the red glow from the men's cigars in the semi-darkness—the moon hadn't appeared yet—while overhead millions upon millions of stars were popping out all over the heavens. "Why two months ago, I don't believe I even knew just where the Isthmus of Tehuantepec was!" I went on recklessly.

"By Gad, you're as bad as a pretty Philadelphia girl I knew," said Harry Loughridge, sitting up on his *chaise longue*. "It was the day after the Battle of Manila and I was playing golf with her out at the Country Club. 'I say, Mr. Loughridge,' she said coming up to me confidentially—we had just holed in and were starting for the next tee—I say, everybody's talking about Dewey having captured Manila. I wish you'd tell me, what is Manila anyway—a man or a boat?'"

"She reminds me of a popular *débutante* cousin of mine in Kentucky," laughed Anita. "I happened to ask her one day if she had ever read 'Adam Bede' and she said no, she was going out so much she didn't have time for current literature!"



"Won't some one please tell a story on a *man?*" plaintively demanded Mrs. Loughridge from somewhere out of the darkness.

"Yes," said Frank Whitney, "I will. I once knew a bank president who was an amateur gardener on the side, and who administered castor oil and calomel to his droopy plants and drove nails into his trees when he thought they needed a tonic."

"Did he ever water his stock?" asked Dick. We all simply groaned.

"Oh, I say, there's the moon!" cried Anita, and Dick, overjoyed at the *divertissement*, struck an attitude and began:

" 'See yonder fire! It is the moon
Slow rising o'er the eastern hill.
It glimmers on the forest tops,
And through the dewy foliage drops
In little rivulets of light,
And makes the heart in love with night.' "

"The moon's the place for lovers," said Professor Finding dreamily when Dick had subsided. "The days are some six hundred and sixty-five hours long there. If a young man couldn't make an impression in a few moon-days, he'd be pretty sure he was after the wrong young lady!" We

all laughed. "Did any of you young people ever get a look at the moon through a powerful telescope?" he went on.

"Why yes—I have," I said, "and it really does look like a nice round slice of *Schweizerkäse*—all full of holes and nibbled off around the edges," and then almost before I knew it I was telling them of the soft spring nights at college and the troops of happy girls making their way through the woods—the way we two have so often taken together, dear Student of the Stars—to your white marble temple on the little hill, and the long hours spent gazing through the big telescope at the glories of the skies.

Professor Finding sat listening with his head on his hand—did I ever tell you what a splendid head he has, with thick masses of almost white hair that he tosses back every now and then just like an amiable lion?—and quoting softly:

" 'The spacious firmament on high,
With all the blue, ethereal sky,
And spangled heavens, a shining frame,
Their great Original proclaim.' "

And then I began talking of *you* and I suppose I got very enthusiastic, for some of the others laughed, but Professor Finding just looked at me

in a quiet, comprehending sort of way—I could see, for the moon was high up by that time and the *corridor* was as light as possible—and when we got up to go to bed, he took my hand and bent over it and to my astonishment, instead of saying good-night, he said: “Thank you, my dear child.” I couldn’t think what he meant and I didn’t have time to ask, for just then the Ambassador called to him to have a game of pool before going to bed, but he said no, he couldn’t, as he was going to write a long letter to an old friend.

To think that we leave all this blissful solitary loneliness in a few days! *Ay di me!* I wrote you, didn’t I, that we are going to leave here the end of the month and go to Cuernavaca to spend Holy Week?

This will go off before daylight to-morrow morning in the mail canoe Mr. Whitney is sending up to Santa Lucrecia. So—*hasta luego!*

Affectionately,

E. E.

P. S.—Late afternoon. I have just opened my letter to say that Professor Finding has just backed out of going to Cuernavaca with us! He says

important affairs call him to the States and he is going up in the mail canoe with this in the morning. Everybody is *désolé*—he is such a dear.

E. E.

EL PARAISO, *March 30* —.

DEAR FRIEND:

Alas! they were not superfluous—the premonitions, I mean. That prophetic matrimonial feeling in my bones came true last night when Francis Whitney asked me to marry him. I was so surprised after all that I almost said “yes” in my excitement. But then I recollected—things. We had left the others playing bridge in the big hall, and strolled out through the *corridor*, down the garden walk to the river. It was late and the moon had come up and was shining on the broad Coatzacoalcos in that benignant, imperturbable way she has irrespective of what one’s feelings may be.

My feelings were quite a miscellaneous jumble, for I felt that things were going to happen, and I was glad and sorry and uncertain and afraid and ever so many other things. Well, we were walking up and down and I was trying to sort out my sensations and see which was my long suit, when

suddenly he turned to me and said quite simply and without a word of warning, "I love you, Eleanor, and I want you to marry me, will you?"

"I can't," I said firmly and sadly, for did I not know what was coming? One isn't gently handed back to one's waiting parent twice for lack of money without learning a little wisdom! He waited an instant and then said, "Why not?" He spoke quietly, but a light bamboo stick he held in his hands snapped as he spoke. I was rather glad. I wouldn't have wanted him to be *quite* so calm as he sounded!

And then I began reciting my lesson. "Because I am dowerless. My father and I do not believe in marriage settlements. An American wife is not bought and sold, nor is she meant to pay a husband's debts. She is meant for other and higher things than——"

"And, what on earth has all that got to do with you and me?" he demanded, and in the bright moonlight I could see that his face was the picture of astonishment. "Please understand, whether you have money or not, it is nothing to me," he said icily, and then he went on more quietly after an instant's silence, "don't you see Eleanor that I love you with all my heart and soul,

and won't you tell me the real reason why you say 'I can't'?"


And so, out there in the tropical night, under the big moon, with the faint fragrance from the flowering coffee trees drifting to us on the night wind, I told him all about Bobby.

"My heart is a bankrupt, you see," I finished a little bitterly, "or rather, it is a piece of damaged goods. You are so honest yourself that I must be honest, too—and there would inevitably come a day when you would feel that you had been cheated——"

"Never!" he burst out. "Does it make a diamond less precious because some poor fool can't buy it? Lord Standish hadn't the price, that's all! He—he—! Oh, I'd better not talk about him—what I would say wouldn't be pretty—!" He could hardly speak and I could feel what a restraint he was putting on himself.

"But you see, there is the cold fact—I did love Bobby—I loved him enough to promise to marry him——"

"What of it?" he interrupted, and then he added a little sadly, "I suppose it is as hard to be first in the heart of a woman as it was to be first at the pool of Bethesda."



"And are you the angel going to trouble the waters of my soul?" I asked somewhat tremulously, though I tried to laugh.

He faced me suddenly with such an air of determination that my quaking heart gave an awful leap.

"Yes," he said grimly. "Yes, I shall trouble you until one or the other of us dies—unless you agree to marry me first! Nothing will ever make me give you up. As for Lord Robert Stan-dish—you're just a child, Eleanor, you'll forget him!"

"Oh, if only I could be sure!" I breathed, "but suppose I should meet him—suppose—! How can I be sure there will be no ghosts—*pas de revenants*?"

"Nonsense!" he said, and oh, you don't know how delicious it was to hear him call all the black shadows that have hovered over me for a year "nonsense!" I felt like flinging myself upon him and crying out, "Oh, please say that again! I'm so glad, oh, so glad that it is nonsense!"

But I managed to hold on to myself. He is the fairest, squarest man I have ever known and I can't take his love and not pay him back

in full—I made him understand how I felt finally—but I like him so much that I was weak enough to say he might go down to Cuernavaca with us. He would have gone anyway, I feel sure!

And now what does your Serene Highness think of all this earthly, passionate talk? Have I troubled the placid calm wherein you dwell? I hope not, but I had to confess to some one, and to whom would I so naturally, so lovingly turn as to you—I who have no mother? I can't talk it over with Anita, for I know just what she would do and say. She would elevate her dramatic eyebrows, gaze at me with her handsome eyes and ask me if I were *mad* to throw away such a good "chance" as Francis Whitney! By the way, it seems, according to Gordon Finding, that he is quite peculiarly eligible—comes of a fine Maryland family, whose present head, Frank's grandfather, is a distinguished gentleman of the old school, a scholar and United States Minister to Spain back in the seventies. When a young man Mr. Finding was one of his secretaries. He is also wealthy, so that when he dies—Frank's father was killed in an accident years ago—Frank will be quite vulgarly rich. His financial

outlook is therefore brighter than Bobby's or Pacho's and he can afford to cast his eyes upon a Dowerless One, if he so wishes!

E. E.

We will go up the river with our letters tomorrow, and, oh, how I hate to leave all this! I could become a happy hedonist down here. Mr. and Mrs. Loughridge go too. Their visit here is at an end, but they will stop on in Mexico City for several weeks.

E.

CUERNAVACA, *April 6*, —

We put on our seven-league boots the last day of March, and here we are far, far away from our enchanted Isthmus. But it is still enchanted and enchanting country that we are in—I'm beginning to wonder if there is a square foot of Mexico that isn't lovely. I think if I hadn't had a conventional training I would go around with my eyes and tongue hanging out with curiosity and feverish interest. We got back to Mexico City the morning of the 2d—just in time to see from our windows the big anniversary parade in celebration of the Battle of Puebla. I was madly enthusiastic, as Diaz was the hero of the day, of course, although

I can't help having a twinge of sympathy every time I think of poor Maximilian. The *rurales* were superb. They made one realize to the full what an excellent utilitarian idea it is to "set a thief to catch a thief."

Everybody was just waiting for "Pueblo Day" to be over to rush down to Cuernavaca for Holy Week, so that we came down the next morning—Tuesday—with a crowd. The Ambassador and Mrs. Finding have a small party, among them Prince Sumarakoff and Miss Dalmy, with whom he is very obviously in love. Sirvez Khan was to have gone with them, but he was suddenly recalled to Washington a week ago and I must say I am delighted he is gone. He was getting very oppressive. Lermontoff joined us—to Frank Whitney's annoyance—and has been amiable and unlike himself all the week.

This place is unbelievably old. You, who know everything, perhaps know its history, but I was only initiated on my arrival by Dick, who took me a long stroll over the city and was so full of information that I felt like a "personally conducted tour" all by myself.


Do you realize that Cortez made his summer home here and occupied his leisure moments in



building a pearl of a palace?—a palace that, although it was finished a mere bagatelle of three hundred and seventy-five years ago, is still in perfectly good condition and is being used to-day as the State Capitol? There surely couldn't have been any "graft" in State Capitols in those days! We went all over it one morning and took innumerable kodak pictures. There is an open loggia with tall slender columns that is only a thought less divine than the sweeping view of the Campagna one gets from it. I can imagine this loggia on hot, starlit nights in those long gone years, set for a feast. The haughty Spanish conqueror, with the dusky termagant La Marina by his side, sits at the head of the table wreathed with flowers and laden with meats and fruits in barbaric profusion. Great gold and silver flagons of heavy aromatic Spanish wines are passed around by half-naked Indian servitors; the talk grows coarse and bold; a bravo stumbles to his feet muttering a curse and clapping an unsteady hand to his sword hilt; there is the sound of distant music; the moon comes up, flooding the loggia and the misty *campo* with a white light—! *Ay di me!* it must have been great fun, if a little perilous, to have lived in the splendid days of Cortez!

And then a couple of centuries later comes Monsieur de la Borda, a poor French boy who managed to scrape together sixty millions and was held in high esteem, which goes to prove that Mexican money is as good as any other kind, provided you have enough of it. *His* diversion was not palaces but gardens, and he certainly was a prince among gardeners. He could have given Le Nôtre points. Such terraces, such flowery paths, such unexpected lovelinesses, of lake and vista and spraying fountains and "wind-warm" spots! And now to all that carefully planned, extravagant beauty is added the pathetic beauty of decay. It has been nearly a century and a half since the garden-loving Monsieur de la Borda had to say farewell to all that loveliness, and time has cracked the marble benches and the twisting pathways have lost their sprightly, well-groomed look and are overgrown with flowery masses of bloom and the fountains are hushed. But oh, it is heavenly yet! We have walked there every evening.

Wednesday evening Lermontoff and I slipped away from the others as we left the church—we have gone every night, and I wear the *mantilla* decorously—and wandered down one of the lonely



old walks to a little square tower that caps a corner of these old gardens. It is a divine spot—open to all the winds of heaven. The land falls sheer away from the base and far below one the *campo* stretches out limitlessly. At night when one sits there it is as if one were poised for flight across those dim level reaches so far beneath, and the sensation is indescribably exhilarating and awesome.

Perhaps it was the strange beauty of our surroundings that made Lermontoff so unlike himself. He actually seemed *human* and began talking to me of himself—telling me of his youth—“*ero un paggio*” (I can hear Bispham singing it!)—a page to the Empress Elizabeth. He talks well when he wants to take the trouble and I got a rather pathetic picture of the little velveteen page, kept up to all sorts of unseemly hours at night, perishing of sleepiness, almost running to keep up with the long steps of the stately Empress and hold on to the heavy velvet train. By day the picture was not pathetic. Then he and the other pages lolled in ante-rooms, indecorously familiar or lazily impertinent to those unfortunate enough to have to do with them. Great generals and statesmen were kept waiting for an audience and


treated with an insolence or negligence they dared not resent. It all sounded rather like a page out of Dumas.

And then having once unbosomed himself he warmed to the subject, and suddenly I was aware that he was telling me the secrets of his life—of his wild young manhood, his early, disastrous marriage with a young Russian actress, the bitter anger of his father, the distress of his mother, a most *hochgeboren* German princess, and his practical exile. No wonder he had a *weltschmerz* expression! I looked at him in pity and amazement.

As I looked he raised one of my hands to his lips—it was the first time he had ever taken such a liberty.

"Dear young lady," he said in a low voice, "believe me, if I were free, I would do myself the honor of laying my heart and somewhat broken fortunes at your feet." He spoke quite dispassionately, but there was a note of sincerity in his voice I could not doubt.

"But—but," I stammered, "you must be mistaken—you never seemed to like me at all—!" It was horribly *bête*, school-girlish, but I was so taken by surprise that I hardly knew what I was



saying. Even in his distress he could not help smiling at my strange assumption that he could be mistaken about such a matter

"I am usually unfortunate in my manner," he said quietly, shrugging his shoulders a little. "The truth is I love you very much, Mademoiselle. I love innocence without ignorance, I love a woman of the world who is yet a child at heart. I—but what is the use of talking of it?" he broke off impatiently. "Here comes one who is free to marry you and who loves you probably far more than I *can* love—for the capacity for loving deeply is as rare as genius, I take it."

I followed his glance, and there strolling up the moonlit walk was Frank Whitney. A moment later Lermontoff was gone and I was alone with Frank who, despite a studiously serene manner, looked fagged and anxious. And although, of course, I am not going to marry him, do you know I was glad he was—unhappy! Dear me! I wonder why I, who would not go fishing for worlds, rather enjoy sticking a little barbed hook of jealousy into a particularly nice man and watching him squirm!

I won't be able to see him squirm much longer though, for we all go back to Mexico City by to-

morrow's train, and then surely he will go down to the Isthmus and we shall forget each other and I shall be at peace once again.

And to think that day after to-morrow is Easter Sunday when we may burst out again in gorgeous raiment, Lent and penance being over!

We have missed Professor Finding so! I can't imagine what stupid business can have called him away just now.

Your letters are becoming as rare as angel's visits. Do write oftener to your Earth Worm,

E. E.

P. S.—I haven't begun to tell you about Cuernavaca—there are the most interesting old houses and queer little streets! There is one, a crooked, narrow little affair, not far from the Palazzo, with a lavender stucco house in it that has the most divine little casement-balcony to it. The rest of the house is commonplace enough, but the balcony—! It is like a perfect line in some otherwise worthless poem, a haunting melody in some dreary opera.

P. S. 2.—To-day at noon we went out into the streets to see the Judases burned. It is a weird, Good Friday custom here.

P. S. 3.—I can't seem to get this mess of a letter finished. I just opened it to ask you what you thought of Lermontoff—I can't believe he really was in earnest, and yet one can hardly believe that even reckless, world-weary Russian counts go about telling people they are in love with them just *pour passer le temps*.

E. E.

MEXICO CITY,
HOTEL DE LA PASEO, *April* 10, —.


DEAR INHABITANT OF STARDOM:

I am sitting in my own room here at the Paseo once more and feeling so jolly comfortable in a kimono with my "raving" locks hanging down my back and my blue satin *meules* dangling on my tired toes. This *déshabille* is the result of having been at the Flower Parade all day. I remind myself of what you once told me—that the best part of social functions is the getting back to one's fire, one's wrapper, and one's slippers! However, I don't at all detest social functions—certainly not the Battle of Flowers—and I can even look forward with equanimity to the dinner at the Belgian Legation to which we go in an hour. Lupe is fussing around now, laying

out my dinner things and much scandalized that the señorita does not rest—she has already informed me six times that I look *muy cansada*, and casts such gloomy glances at me that I shall make this scrawl short and lie down for a few minutes to please her.

It really has been a strenuous day. Arthur Chiswold had invited us to watch the procession in the morning from the windows of his bank, so at eleven Dick, Anita, Frank Whitney, and I started. The crowd was so great that we had to leave the carriage and walk through the Alameda and so around into San Francisco Street, and when we finally got to the bank we found a good many already there—Lermontoff, the Honorable Trevor St. John, who made me uncomfortable by staring at me in the oddest way all morning, the Findings, and the "Oriental Express," whom I hadn't seen for weeks.


The bank was prettily decorated and there was delicious claret cup and nut sandwiches to eat while we watched the procession. Our chairs were set out on the little iron balconies of the second story windows beneath wide awnings, and we could see perfectly the stream of beautifully decorated carriages, automobiles, bicycles, wagons



—everything smothered in flowers and ribbons. There was one phaeton a mass of violets, thousands and thousands of them, drawn by two magnificent blue roans. And who do you think held the purple ribbon reins in her slim hands? Why the beautiful blonde who was with Lermontoff that night at Sylvain's! I came near asking him again who she was, but remembered Anita's injunctions just in time, so I asked Arthur Chiswold instead, but strange to say neither he nor St. John knew. Perhaps after all she isn't a great friend of Lermontoff's because he didn't enthuse at all over the beautiful decorations of the phaeton when I called his attention to it—I thought I could at least do that in spite of the fact that Anita was frowning at me—but insisted on gazing at a white motor covered with bougainvillea in which were Pachó and his two appallingly ugly cousins the Señoritas Carrera.

The shops all up and down San Francisco Street and Cinco de Mayo were elaborately decorated and every one was throwing confetti and those serpentines of bright colored paper. But the real fun came in the afternoon when everything on wheels in Mexico was out. The drive was in a double line going in opposite directions

all around Chapultepec, and the effect was lovely. Dick had had the lamps and spokes and traces of the victoria wreathed with gardenias and the top covered with pink roses. It was very pretty and Anita in a cream lace frock was adorable. I wore a pale pink crêpe and must have looked *passablement bien*, for Dick vows that Frank never left off looking at me the entire afternoon. We had brought baskets of gardenias and roses with us to throw and they were never empty, for as fast as we threw them at passing acquaintances others were showered on us. And such quantities of confetti and serpentines! The victoria was a tangled mass of bright streamers, and José and Alfonso on the box, the horses, whip and harness were all inextricably wound up in them. José looked as pleased as Punch at all the attention his señoras were receiving and didn't mind a bit about his foolish-looking whip and all the bushels of confetti over the carriage seats. Poor man, I don't believe he'll get it all out in a month, and as for my clothes—! Lupe is shaking out the tricorné lace hat I wore now and looking unutterable things as the confetti drops out. But I don't mind her wrath a bit—*ça me laisse absolument froide!* I've had a good time and though, of



course, this Battle of Flowers can't compare with last year's at Nice, then I was wretched and now—! Well—I'm almost happy.

What do you think came for me yesterday? A beautiful Persian prayer rug from His Excellency Sirvez Khan! I am rather ashamed now of feeling so glad that he had gone back. It is a dream of a rug, its adorable colors fading softly into one another and worn quite smooth by "shuffling knees." It makes one think of that passionate little poem of Anne Reeve Aldrich's. Do you remember it?

"Made smooth some centuries ago
By praying Eastern devotees,
Blurred by those dusky naked feet,
And somewhat worn by shuffling knees,
In Ispahan,

"It lies upon my modern floor,
And no one prays there any more.
It never felt the worldly tread
Of smart *bottines*, high-heeled and red,
In Ispahan.

"And no one prays there now, I said?
Ah well, that was a hasty word.
Once with my face against its woof,
A fiercer prayer it never heard
In Ispahan."

Perhaps a year ago I, too, would have knelt,
"my face against its woof," in fierce prayer! But

now—but for one black shadow, the fear that I am not so secure as I feel, the torment that the sight of Bobby, the sound of his voice, might dispel my hard-won serenity, but for that I might be quite happy, entirely contented!

Thursday we receive with Mrs. Finding, and it will seem delightful to be back at the Embassy “afternoon” and see every one again.

Lupe tells me in icy tones that I have used up all my time and that I shall have only half an hour in which to dress. So good-night.

E. E.

P. S.—I brave Lupe’s anger long enough to open this and ask why do you not write? I have had not a line from you in two—three—weeks.

Yours indignantly,

E. E.

MEXICO CITY,

HOTEL DE LA PASEO, *April 12, —,*

Midnight.

DEAREST FRIEND:

Oh, now I know why in the old dramas the heroines used to fling up their white arms and cry: “Oh, world! oh, life! oh, love! oh, time!” I understand it all—all that distracted, exclamatory

ecstasy; I think I can almost understand Maeterlinck's disjointed iteration! I, too feel like crying out: "Oh, love; oh, happiness; oh, immortality; oh, anything and everything!" Don't think me crazy—though I believe I am—just a little bit. The truth is I am free and blissfully happy. In plain English I have seen Bobby and don't care tuppence! It happened this afternoon at the Embassy. I believe I wrote that Anita and I were to help Mrs. Finding receive. Well, we had gone early and there was a regular mob of people. I was really tired after so much handshaking and seeing that people got their tea and everything, and was standing a little apart in the small drawing-room with Hitchcock (one of the young secretaries of the Embassy) when suddenly I looked up and there, coming in the door at the end of the far salon, was the Honorable Trevor St. John and beside him Lord Robert Standish! They came straight toward me and for a minute I felt myself going white and my heart beating like a hammer. The Honorable Trevor made a low bow when he reached me and a curious smile illumined his face as, linking his arm in young Hitchcock's, he marched him off into the other room, leaving Bobby and me alone. Now, I

know why he looked at me so oddly the other morning at the Flower Parade—he knew that Lord Robert was almost here!

As for Bobby and me, we simply stood there staring at each other. I had the most curious sensation—I realized that it was Bobby and yet it wasn't at all the Bobby I had known. This was not the wonderful creature I had adored and desired to marry and mourned. This was just a blond young gentleman, irreproachably clothed, with pleasant manners, and good-looking in a superficial, undistinguished way—the sort of young man one meets at afternoon teas and has to be introduced again the next time.

I don't know what he was thinking about me; he just stood there gazing at me as if he would never leave off, and finally he put out his hand and said in what I suppose I would have thought a year ago to be a thrilling voice:

“Eleanor!”

And then I felt my color rushing back and my heart slowing down to normal and suddenly I felt a tremendous desire to laugh. I didn't quite give way to it, but I could feel a smile crinkle up the corners of my mouth and eyes and I held out a hand that didn't tremble a bit and said in a very

matter-of-fact voice: "Why how d'ye do, Lord Standish! When did you get here?"

It all happened like a flash of lightning—I can't tell you how, I only know that suddenly, in the twinkling of an eye, all the old, dead, clinging love, the bitter heartache, the black terror, slipped from me and I stood there free and smiling! Oh, I know now how a snake feels when he wriggles free of his dead, wornout skin, how a butterfly rejoices when it breaks its chrysalis! Do you wonder that I want to get up and shout: "Oh, world! oh, mystery! oh, bliss!" etc., etc.?

Apparently Bobby didn't in the least know what was going on inside me, for he continued to look unutterable things and said again in a low, tense voice: "Eleanor, I want to see you alone, I want to talk with you!"

I was so certain that everything was all right with me that I smiled again and said briskly, "Certainly," and led him through the French window out on to the *corridor* and so down into the deserted garden. We walked down a path edged thick with palms and rose-bushes to a secluded stone bench covered with bougainvillea and set round a tiny, splashing fountain. It was getting dark, but in the light that still lingered I could see that

Bobby looked pale and fagged, and for just an instant a little feeling of sympathy welled up in my heart.

He dropped on the bench beside me and took one of my hands in his.

"Eleanor, I've come for you. I can't stop loving you and I'm not going to try any more. I've broken with the mater—told her I was going to marry you, money or no money—just told her up and down that she and old Abingdon would have to arrange some way themselves to pay off those mortgages—that I didn't intend to sacrifice myself and my feelings any longer!"

He was so joyously sure of himself and me that my sympathy vanished.

"That was noble of you," I murmured. "By the way, how did you know I was here?"

"Trevor wrote me three weeks ago that you were here and had half the men in Mexico City at your heels! Did you think I could stand that? I was an ass, an infernal, unmitigated, unbelievable ass to have ever let you go for a minute! You're more beautiful than ever—nothing will make me let you escape again, I can tell you!"

"Indeed?" I queried. "If you really love me, Lord Standish, it is a pity you did not arrive at

that very masculine decision some nine months ago."

"Lord Standish! Lord Standish!" he cried, "what on earth do you mean by calling me Lord Standish, Eleanor? Oh, my dear girl, don't rub it in—haven't I acknowledged I was an ass to have ever let anything break our engagement? You're the only girl in the world for me. I'll be hanged if I let money or anything else ever come between us again. I *must* have you. I tell you, Eleanor," he turned a tragic face upon me, "I haven't been happy a minute since—since——"

"Don't!" I interrupted hastily. "I haven't been happy either, but now I assure you, it's all right——"

"You mean it?" he broke in eagerly. "You forgive me and you'll marry me?"


"My dear Bobby," I said, dipping my fingers in the fountain and trying not to see the wound I was inflicting, "when you were extremely young did you never read the story of Humpty Dumpty?"

He groaned and turned away. "But see here," he exclaimed fiercely, facing me again, "I won't believe it, you don't mean it——"

"But I do mean it—exactly—Bobby," I cut in wearily. "Don't let's discuss it any more," I said, getting up. "What's the use?"

"But I tell you I love you! I love you, Eleanor, and I've come to get you—" he spoke in a bewildered, pitiful way.

"I believe that you think you love me, Bobby, and I know that you have at last decided to come for me. But, it's too late—I can't go with you—never, never! Oh, I loved you, too, Bobby—loved you so well that there is nothing in the world I would have let come between us. I loved you so that I believed for months that there was some dreadful mistake, that you would come for me, that you would prove yourself to be the man I thought you were. And then when I could no longer deny to myself that you had given up this dowerless young person by the eminently sound business advice of your mother and your lawyer, do you know what I did? I tore out of my heart every bit of love for you, tore it out and threw it away. And it is dead—withered and dead like grass—don't you remember the psalm, Bobby? 'For the wind passeth over it and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more.' No more, Bobby!" I was speaking rather wildly



and trembling all over, but mixed up with the pain in my heart was a mad feeling of relief and joy. I sank down again on the stone bench. "And now won't you leave me, Bobby! Please go back to the house—I want to be alone a little."

For a few minutes he stood there looking at me in pained amazement that he had been so unceremoniously denied what he had so ardently wanted. Then with a last clutching at dignity and wounded pride he bowed low, turned on his heel and walked away quickly.

But I was not to be alone very long, for I had had barely time to cool my furiously beating pulses in the fountain, when I heard footsteps and saw coming toward me Francis Whitney. I jumped to my feet with the impulse to escape, and then suddenly I knew I didn't want to escape; I knew that the man coming to me in the fragrant twilight was the man I could trust and respect and love for life, and I stood quite still and waited for him.

"I won't pretend I didn't know you were here," he said, trying to smile. "I saw you and Lord Standish come out here and when—when he went back a few minutes ago, I determined to come and find you. I couldn't wait—I had to know

what had happened—whether your fears had come true——”

I held out a hand to him. I was so happy that I thought I was smiling.

“It’s—it’s all right,” I stammered and then quite to my surprise I burst out crying!

And now, dear Star-Gazer, what do you think of all this? I who did not wish to climb, find myself once more on the heights, in the intoxicating air, with limitless views stretching out before my eyes. I am a long, long way from that calm life you lead—the life I have lately dreamed of for myself. I have set my feet on another path, turned my eyes to another vision of happiness. And shall I confess it? To-night I am afraid a little, I think. To-night I envy you your passionless, serene existence, your communion with the stars in their fixed courses, your interest in the unalterable laws of numbers. How secure is your happiness. And mine! I have placed mine in the hands of another; on him, in the uncertain future, must I depend for light and warmth and joy. Suppose he should fail me! But oh, he will not! I shall suppose nothing so dismal! Life at El Paraiso is going to be worthy its name! We are going to be eternally happy in

our isthmian home that I am going to help Frank make more and more beautiful. Doing is so much better than just being and we are going to make our little kingdom. It will not have come to us, handed down from generation to generation. How could I have ever thought Standish Court more lovely than El Paraiso? And as for Frank—he is making himself into something bigger and better than a lord or marquis, and when we get tired of working at our characters and our coffee and think we have earned a rest, we will take a boat from Vera Cruz for Paris or New York and see the world again, and then come back to our own kingdom happier than ever.

In my joy I don't want to forget Bobby and I have determined to get father to let him in on the "ground floor" of that big mining company he is organizing in Durango, so he can make a pile of money. I'm so ridiculously happy that I haven't a grain of resentment against anybody on earth—least of all against irresolute, charming, impecunious Bobby!


Your ecstatic

E. E.

SAN ANGEL, MEXICO, *April 18*, —.

DEAR LADY OF THE MOON AND STARS:

Behold me the morning after—the morning after the engagement dinner! I am propped up in bed in one of Tia Carmen's best rooms. Winged Cupids disport themselves miles above my head and Lupe looks a mere speck in the distance as she puts away my things in a big *armoire* on the other side of the room. As you will have surmised from the foregoing remarks Tia Carmen gave me a dinner last night to announce my engagement officially to the waiting Mexican world! As the distance back into town is considerable, Anita and I stayed the night and are to stay on for a day or two. Who also do you think is here? Father!! The day after I wrote you I cabled father about Frank and, of course, the dear dropped everything and made a bee-line for Mexico. He got here yesterday in time for the dinner and just may be I wasn't glad to see him! So now here are all my dear ones except you. Oh, how I do wish something would bring you down, but I suppose nothing short of a celestial cataclysm could move you from the contemplation of the heavenly bodies.



Besides father's arrival yesterday the day was made eventful by the appearance of a letter from grandmama. I had cabled her at the same time I cabled father, and the delicious old darling wrote me the most characteristic letter! She is *désolée*, of course, that I am not to marry a title, but consoles herself, she naïvely remarks, when she remembers that Frank is a Baltimore Whitney and the grandson of an American Ambassador to Spain. She knew Frank's grandfather in Madrid—met him when she was a young girl making the *grand tour*—and hints of gay times with him in the Spanish capital. I am sure they must have been gay—I simply couldn't imagine any one having a dull time with grandmama! She wants Frank to enter the diplomatic service immediately. But instead of that we are to be married here at San Angel in early June and go straight down to our home, to El Paraiso. There is no place else I so much want to go to.

The dinner last night was as magnificent and ceremonious as Tia Carmen could make it, which is very much so indeed, and the Major-domo was white with anxiety lest everything should not be perfect. Everything was gorgeous, however, and the company was most resplendent. Nearly all

the diplomats were here and all the smart people I had met and lots of frumpy ones of the purely Mexican set who don't mingle much with the English and Americans, but sit back and consider themselves "the real, real thing."

Frank and I would have been glad to escape so much fuss, but after all it *was* thrilling to be so distinctly the centre of interest, and I never felt more excited and elated in my life. Anita tells me I never looked so well, which is a mercy! My frock *was* pretty—a soft pale blue satin with an overdress of jewelled net and my pearls, of course. As for Frank he was the finest-looking man there, except father and Mr. Finding. They are "three of a kind" and were quite apart from the rest. Even dear old Dick, with his dark eyes and long lashes, looked a bit effeminate beside them!

And now write—write! The Sphinx herself is not more inarticulate than you have been these last weeks. Does all this talk of loving, of engagement dinners, of marrying and giving in marriage bore and disgust your Serene Highness? Oh, if you only knew how thrilled I am you wouldn't blame me. I feel as recklessly happy and irrepressible as one of your runaway stars

that has got off its celestial trolley and gone sky-larking around among the planets!

Tia Carmen has just sent in to me by Blanca the adorable cobwebby Alençon lace bridal veil out of the carved chest for my wedding present!

Your happy

E. E.

MEXICO CITY, *April 20*, —.

DEAR HYPOCRITE!

I know now what people mean when they say a thing is "too good to be true!" It is wonderful, deliciously incredible, and the best of all is it is a fact! So you are "the old friend" to whom Professor Finding "had to write" instead of going to the Circus! You are the "important business" that took him away from the Isthmus! It was to hear of you that he listened so patiently to my long-winded accounts of college days!

Here have I been pouring out my bashful soul to you in letters and not a sign did you give! I have been abjectly remorseful at the thought of how bored, how disgusted you must be with all my talk of broken faith, engagements, and marriage, and all the while you were up to your eyes in a love affair that for pure romance outshines

mine as the moon outshines the stars! I have been envying you your "passionless, serene existence, your communion with the stars in their fixed courses, your interest in the unalterable laws of numbers!" Dear me! why didn't you just tell me you were in love with a man? And all these years you have let me artlessly prattle of my immature love affairs and you never told me a word of the tragedy of your girlhood. But I understand—I understand. You thought it was dead and buried and it tears one's heart to talk of one's dead. And it is far better that I knew nothing of it all; perhaps I could not have played my little part in bringing you back to each other so well—I would have been self-conscious, clumsy. Don't thank me. Just let us thank our "lucky stars" together that the quarrel, the long years of estrangement, are over.

By the way, what a beautiful time you two will have examining those same stars together. I can just see you roaming the heavens—through a telescope—in a delicious *solitude à deux*! And while you two dear Star-Gazers are studying the skies, Frank and I will be studying the old earth that is to help us make our fortune—for you know though we will both be rich ultimately, Frank

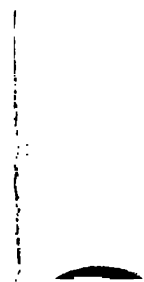
has to work for his living now, and I am still "the Dowerless One."

By the way, I got a cable from Aunt Amélie Tuesday. There was just one word in it—one expressive little word—"Thankful. Aunt Amélie." Pleasant, *n'est-ce-pas?*

But oh, I can stand that and everything else when I think that you have promised to come down to us for your wedding journey. How happy Frank and I will be to take you two dear ones away with us to our isthmian paradise, down to the fragrant coffee *fincas*, the long, white moonlit nights, the ever-blooming flowers!

E. E.

THE END.



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